

Light:

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"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—*Goethe.*

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[The Editor of "LIGHT" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

On Thursday, the 17th, the London Theosophists held a conversazione at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. Invitations were issued to meet Mr. Sinnett. Some 270 assembled, and among them were many faces well known in society, and not a few men of letters and science whose judgment and opinion the world is accustomed to treat with deference. The company would be described in the language of the ordinary reporter as at once fashionable and influential. During the evening the President of the London Lodge delivered an introductory address which dealt generally with the pretensions of Theosophy, and its attitude towards the religions of the day. It was forcibly pointed out that as a religion Theosophy found nothing in the theologies of the hour that barred its acceptance. The speaker, a Catholic Christian, was in intimate accord with the author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, though they had drawn their inspiration from two such apparently divergent sources.*

But the feature of the evening was an address from Mr. Sinnett, in the course of which he stated with his usual force and clearness the position of the Theosophical Society. Before attempting an outline of what he put forward, I may remark that the publication of his book, and, in no less degree, the large gathering that he addressed, as well as the speech which he then delivered, mark a new departure in the history of Theosophy in London. So long as the Society was one of students, attracted by a common taste, and perhaps bound together by a common hope that some light would eventually dawn on the faithful watcher from the source of light and truth—the East, the world had little or nothing to do with the Theosophists. Even Spiritualists had no necessary concern with them except in so far as it was necessary to vindicate their own beliefs from assault, or desirable to comprehend a philosophy which so nearly touched their own interests. But now that the veil of secrecy has been to a considerable extent cast aside, the world and the Spiritualists are bound to consider the claims made on behalf of Theosophy.

What may be the answer of the various types of mind to which Mr. Sinnett addressed himself on Thursday last, I do not know. Possibly I should not be far wrong if I were to

say that many would go away bewildered with a feeling that there are antecedent points of difficulty to be settled, before examining the superstructure so skilfully raised on a basis that has not yet been submitted to a sufficient examination. And it requires a more exhaustive study of the scheme of thought expounded in Mr. Sinnett's volume, and stated more popularly in his recent addresses at the Prince's Hall, and at various fashionable assemblies in London drawing-rooms, before I, for one, should like to commit myself to a statement of what unquestionably appears on the surface to be the irreconcilability of Theosophical and Spiritualistic belief. I do not know whether the doctrines that antagonise each other are, in the language of theology, cardinal and to be held *de fide*. I hope not: for if it be so then the knowledge of the Spiritualist is at variance with the truth as propounded by the Theosophist. No doubt it is on the great question of spirit-communion that the battle will rage most fiercely. It is that which seems to me to be so utterly beyond accommodation. But this is a question far too wide and imperial in its import to be discussed with imperfect knowledge and with the insufficient space at my disposal. It is one to which it will be incumbent on me to recur. Meantime I return to Mr. Sinnett's address, of which I present a brief epitome.

He commenced with some words in explanation of the attitude in which the Theosophical Society stood towards the work in which it is engaged, and the adepts in India with which it is connected. To make these relations intelligible he entered, in the first instance, into an account of the objects with which occult devotees in the East pursued adeptship, and the nature of their achievement if they attained it. The purpose they sought arose out of their comprehension, in the first place, of that great scheme of human evolution set forth recently in Mr. Sinnett's book on "*Esoteric Buddhism*." For all mankind at this present stage of the evolutionary process, or for the vast majority, the exceptions so far hardly requiring to be taken into account in a broad, general sketch of the position, there was a certain sort of spiritual future awaiting each Ego at death. And this spiritual future might easily be one of great and elevated enjoyment. But the pursuer of adeptship aimed at something more than elevated enjoyment in the spiritual state; he aimed at great developments of knowledge concerning Nature, and at perpetuity of existence, even beyond that very remote period in future evolution up to which the majority of mankind might gradually drift.

Nature would not grant perpetuity of existence which itself was only compatible with very advanced and enlarged knowledge, to any Ego, however good and virtuous, as a reward for mere goodness. The natural reward of goodness was happiness in the spiritual state,—a happiness, the duration of which might enormously transcend the brief periods of objective existence in which it might have been earned, but which in the progress of ages would come to an end by the exhaustion of the causes which had produced it. The only way to get on in the evolutionary process beyond the stage to which goodness could carry the Ego was to develop supreme spiritual wisdom or knowledge, and that was the object at which the efforts of Adepts were directed. Now,

* A full report of the Address of Mrs. Kingsford appears on page 337.

above all things, the Adepts in pursuing this object were eager to unite their own progress with that of the human race generally to the utmost extent of their power to accomplish this. Far from being selfish in their struggle for development, they were in such a position as to know that a policy of selfishness would be fatal to their own advancement, and learned to seek this in the total abandonment of their own personal welfare as compared with the effort to benefit others. They were constantly engaged in intervention, by one means or another, in the affairs of the world, even though the conditions of their existence forbade them from intermingling with the world. Their action was carried on by means of those higher senses and faculties with which their occult training invested them. In reference to these powers, it was desirable that people who paid attention to the subject should understand that the Adept did not seek occult knowledge for the sake of the powers it incidentally invested him with any more than a patriotic soldier would seek a military career for the sake of wearing a red coat. The powers of adeptship were a very embarrassing fact connected with that state of knowledge, for these powers were the explanation of the apparently timid and seemingly unreasonable policy of silence and reservation in regard to their knowledge which the Adepts persisted in following. To teach people in general the mere philosophy of Occultism, if that were done freely and carelessly, would be to put them within the reach of secrets the possession of which would enable them, if willing to do evil to others, to work the most disastrous confusion all through human society and commit almost any crimes undetected.

On the other hand, it was conceived by the Adepts that the time had now come when it was necessary to fling into the current of human thought some knowledge of true spiritual science, that mankind might be armed, in advance, with a higher religion to take the place of superstitious creeds and dogmas by the time these should crumble away. It was out of this conviction, on their part, that the Theosophical Society had arisen. That Society, and the teachings conveyed to the world through its intermediation, constituted an offer of enlightenment to the civilised world in regard to true spiritual science, the importance of which could not be overrated. It remained to be seen how far the advanced thinkers of London would respond to that offer, how far they would realise the coherence, beauty, and truth of the teachings so far put forward, and unite in asserting an intelligent demand for more. That demand, to be successful, would now have to be made by a Theosophical Society which should take a somewhat new departure. Hitherto that Society had been rather a body of secluded thinkers and students, as far as the British branch was concerned at all events, than a body of persons seeking to make converts. Now the time had come when the Society had done all it could do along its old lines of effort. In order that its beneficent work might be carried on in the future on the larger scale now contemplated and to the grander results now hoped for, it was necessary that it should take up a position of dignity and influence, that it should be reinforced by qualified representatives of the culture and intellectual effort of the time, and that its hands should be strengthened for the task now lying before it. These considerations had suggested the demonstration of that evening, which was the first effort of any kind which the London Society had made to make itself known beyond the narrow limits of its original organisation. Comparatively small and insignificant to appearance as the Society might be at present, the facts of the whole position were such as to lead those who had studied them most closely to the conclusion that this little Society was in possession of the first gleams of the spiritual science which must ultimately become the religion of all the world.

In the course of his speech, and in further explanation

of the point of view from which the Adepts themselves regarded the efforts embodied in the Theosophical Society, Mr. Sinnett read the following passages from a letter written by one of the greatest among them. The letter had been specially aimed at repressing the craving for scientific explanations of abnormal phenomena which had been freely expressed in the beginning by Europeans in India connected with the Society.

"It is not the individual and determined purpose of obtaining for oneself Nirvana (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom), which is, after all, only an exalted and glorious selfishness, but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead, on the right path, our neighbour,—to cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it,—which constitutes the true Theosophist.

"The intellectual portions of mankind seem to be fast dividing into two classes, the one unconsciously preparing for itself long periods of temporary annihilation or states of non-consciousness, owing to the deliberate surrender of their intellect, and its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition—a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle; the other unrestrainedly indulging its animal propensities with the deliberate intention of submitting to annihilation pure and simple, or, in cases of failure, to millenniums of degradation after physical dissolution. Those intellectual classes, reacting upon the ignorant masses which they attract, and which look up to them as noble and fit examples to follow, degrade and morally ruin those they ought to protect and guide.

"In view of the ever increasing triumph, and at the same time the misuse of free thought, it is time that Theosophy should enter the arena. Once delivered from the dead weight of dogmatic interpretations and anthropomorphic conceptions, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be found identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Chrishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shewn as different means for one and the same highway to final bliss, Nirvana. Mystical Christianity, that is to say, that Christianity which teaches self-redemption through one's own seventh principle—the liberated Para-atma or Augoeides, called by the one, Christ, by the other Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit—will be just the same truth as the Nirvana of Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory, apparent self, to recognise our true self in a transcendental Divine life. But if we would not be selfish we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognise the reality of that transcendental self. . . Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the rationale of the spiritual telephone and astral body formation, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, the poor, and the despised to take care of themselves and their hereafter the best they know how. Never. Perish rather the Theosophical Society with both its hapless founders, than that we, the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the embodiment of selfishness the refuge of the few, with no thought in them for the many."

M. A. (OXON.)

To avoid the necessity for response to inquiries from any of our readers it may be well to state that all information respecting the Theosophical Society may be obtained from any of the following gentlemen:—

EDWARD MAITLAND, Esq., Oxford and Cambridge Club, Pall Mall.

SAMUEL WARD, Esq., Orleans Club, King-street, St. James's.

A. P. SINNETT, Esq., Empire Club, Grafton-street, Bond-street.

The *Echo* of July 20th, contains the following paragraph:—
"We hear that Mr. Irving Bishop has actually sent to the Victoria Hospital for Children the magnificent sum of five pounds sterling, as the proceeds of the thousand pounds wager meeting in St. James's Hall. Considering that the Hospital was made a sounding-board for the meeting, considering the lofty and disinterested motives of the transatlantic thought-reader; considering the Hall was filled by people who had given a guinea, or a half-guinea, or five shillings, or a shilling, for admittance, it is rather disappointing to the Hospital to receive only five pounds, and particularly as some of the officers of the Hospital worked so hard to advertise Mr. Bishop." We do not share the disappointment of our contemporary, as we believe Mr. Bishop has done similar things in the United States and in some towns in Great Britain. It would appear, after all, that exposers of Spiritualism make more out of charities than do the latter out of exposers.

THE BRITISH THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

As announced in our last, an open meeting of the London Lodge of the British Theosophical Society took place on Tuesday evening, July 17th, at 9 p.m., at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly.

The principal object of the meeting was to meet Mr. A. P. Sinnett, who has recently returned to this country from India.

The address of the President of the Theosophical Society, alluded to in another column, was as follows :—

"No doubt, our guests will expect me to explain what is meant by the word 'Theosophy,' and what are the aims and objects of the Society over which I preside. I will attempt, in as few words as possible, to give a reply to both these questions.

"Theosophy is the science of the Divine. In this age the word science is readily understood; not so the word Divine. We Theosophists understand by the word Divine, the hidden, interior and primal quality of existence; the noumenal as opposed to the phenomenal. Our relations to the Divine we hold to be relations not to the exterior, but to the within, not to that which is afar off, but to that which is at the heart of all being, the very core and vital point of our own true self. To know ourselves, is, we hold, to know the Divine. And, renouncing utterly the vulgar exoteric, anthropomorphic conception of Deity, we renounce also the exoteric acceptance of all myths and legend associated therewith, replacing the shadow by the substance, the symbol by the significance, the great historical by the true ideal. We hold that the science of the Divine is necessarily a science of such subtle meanings and transcendent verities that common language too poorly conveys them, and they have thus, by universal consent throughout the world, found their only possible expression by the medium of types and metaphors. For metaphor is the language of the poet, or seer, and to him alone is it given to know and to understand the Divine. In the picture-world in which he lives and moves all interior and primal verities are formulated in visions rather than in words. But the multitude for whom he records his visions takes the metaphor for the reality, and exalts the eidolon in the place of the God.

"The object of the Theosophical Society is therefore to remove this misapprehension; to unveil Isis; to restore the Mysteries. Some of us have doubted whether such act of unveiling and of restoration is altogether prudent, arguing that the quality of mind needed for the comprehension of pure truth is rare, and that to most supernaturalism and even superstition are necessities. The answer to such objection is that the present system of theological teaching has long been and still is an impassable barrier in the way of right thought and action, and of scientific progress; a fruitful spring of oppression, fraud and fanaticism, and a direct incentive to materialistic, agnostic, and pessimistic doctrines. In the interest of science, of philosophy, and of charity therefore, the Theosophical Society has resolved to invite all earnest thinkers, students, and lovers of their kind to examine the system and method it presents, and to satisfy themselves that the fullest claims of science are compatible with, and its latest revelations necessary to, the true comprehension of esoteric religion.

"I have used the word religion. It is a word which has unhappily become divorced from its true meaning, and associated with much that is inherently repugnant thereto. One of the efforts of this Society will be to restore to sacred things sacred meanings. Religion is the science of interpretation, the science of binding together earth and Heaven, the science of correspondences, of Sacraments, or as they were called in all old times, the Mysteries. And the religious man is he who is bound together, in whom heart and head have equal sway, in whom Intellect and Conscience work together and in harmony, who is at unity with himself and at one with the whole world of Being. In this sense we are a religious society, for one of our avowed aims is the promotion of universal brotherhood. We profier an Eirenicon to all churches, claiming that, once the veil of symbolism is lifted from the divine face of Truth, all churches are akin, and the basic doctrine of all is identical. The guest of the evening, who stands beside me, is a Buddhist. I, the President of the English Lodge, am a Catholic Christian. Yet we are one at heart, for he has been taught by his Oriental gurus the same esoteric doctrines which I have found under the adopted pagan symbols of the Roman Church, and which esoteric Christianity you will find embodied in 'The Perfect Way.' Greek, Hermetic, Buddhist, Vedantist, Christian—all these Lodges of the Mysteries are fundamentally one and identical in doctrine. And that doctrine is the interpretation of Nature's hieroglyphs, written for us in sky

and sea and land, pictured for us in the glorious pageantry of night and day, of sunset and dawn, and woven into the many-coloured warp and woof of flower, and seed, and rock, of vegetable and animal cells, of crystal and dewdrops, and of all the mighty phenomena of planetary cycles, solar systems, and starry revolutions.

"We hold that no single ecclesiastical creed is comprehensible by itself alone, uninterpreted by its predecessors and its contemporaries. Students, for example, of Christian theology will only learn to understand and to appreciate the true value and significance of the symbols familiar to them by the study of Eastern philosophy and pagan idealism. For Christianity is the heir of these, and she draws her best blood from their veins. And forasmuch as all her great ancestors hid beneath their exoteric formulas and rites—themselves mere husks and shells to amuse the simple-minded—the esoteric or concealed verities reserved for the initiate, so also she reserves for earnest seekers and deep thinkers the true interior Mysteries which are one and eternal in all creeds and churches from the foundation of the world. This true, interior, transcendental meaning is the Real Presence veiled in the elements of the Divine Sacrament: the mystical substance and the truth figured beneath the bread and the wine of the ancient Bacchic orgies, and now of our own Catholic Church. To the unwise, the unthinking, the superstitious, the gross elements are the objects of the rite; to the initiate, the seer, the son of Hermes, they are but the outward and visible signs of that which is ever and of necessity, inward, spiritual, and occult.

"But, not only is it necessary to the Theosophist to study the myths and symbology of former times and contemporary cults; it is also necessary that he should be a student of nature. The science of the Mysteries can be understood only by one who is acquainted, in some measure at least, with the physical sciences; because Theosophy represents the climax and essential motive-meaning of all these, and must be learned in and by and through them. For unless the physical sciences be understood, it will be impossible to comprehend the doctrine of *Vehicles*, which is the basic doctrine of occult science. 'If you understand not earthly things,' said the hierarch of the Christian Mysteries, 'how shall you understand heavenly things?' Theosophy is the royal science. To the unlearned no truth can be demonstrated, for they have no faculty whereby to cognise truth, or to test the soundness of theorems. Ours may be indeed the religion of the poor, but it cannot be that of the ignorant. For we disclaim alike authority and dogma; we appeal to the *reason of humanity*, and to educated and cultivated thought. Our system of doctrine does not rest upon a remote past, it is built upon no series of historical events assailable by modern criticism, it deals not with extraneous personalities or with arbitrary statements of dates, facts, and evidence; but it relates, instead, to the living to-day, and to the ever-present testimony of nature, of science, of thought, and of intuition. That which is exoteric and extraneous is the evanescent type, the historical ideal, the symbol, the form; and these are all in all to the unlearned. But that which is esoteric and interior is the permanent verity, the essential meaning, the thing signified; and to apprehend this, the mind must be reasonable and philosophic, and its method must be scientific and eclectic.

"In the Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta, one of the Buddhist theosophical books, is a passage recording certain words of Gautama Buddha which express to some extent the idea I wish to bring before you. It is this :—

"And whosoever, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto himself, and a refuge unto himself, betaking himself to no external refuge, but holding fast to the truth as his lamp—and to the truth as his refuge, looking not to anyone besides himself as a refuge, even he among my disciples shall reach the very topmost height. But he must be anxious to learn."

"It may, at the outset, appear strange that there should of late have set in among us of the West so strong a current of Buddhism, and many, doubtless, wonder how it comes about that the literary and thinking world of this country has recently begun by common consent to write and talk and hear so much of the sacred books of the East, and of its religious teachers. The Theosophical Society itself has its origin in India, and the motto adopted by its Fellows declares that Light is from the East—*Ex Oriente Lux*.

"In all this is the finger of Law, inevitably and orderly fulfilling the planetary cycle of human evolution, with the self-same precision and certitude which regulates the rotation of the

globe in the inverse direction, or the apparent course of the solar light.

"Human evolution has always followed the course of the sun, from the east to the west, in opposition to the direction of the planet's motion around its axis. If at times this evolution has appeared to return upon its steps, it has been only the better to gather power for some new effort. It has never deviated from its course in the main, save to the right or left, south or north, in its orderly march westward. And slowly, but surely, this great wave of human progress has covered the earth in the wake of the light, rising eastward with the dawn, and culminating mid-heaven with the Catholic Church. In India first, at the beginning of the cycle, rose the earliest glory of the coming day; thence it broke on Syria and on Egypt, where it gave birth to the Kabballistic Hermetic gnosis. Passing thence to Grecian shores, the mysteries of the gods arose among the myrtle and olive groves of Thebes and Athens; and these mysteries, imported into Rome in their turn, became merged in the symbols and doctrines of the Christian Church. And as the cyclic day of human development draws on towards its close in the western hemisphere, the light fades from the orient, and twilight gradually obscures that eastern half of the globe which was erst the spring of dawn and sunshine. What then? When the round of the terrestrial globe is thus accomplished, when the tidal wave of evolution has swept the whole expanse from India to America, it arrives once more at its point of departure. Scarce has day dipt beneath the horizon of the occident, then lo, again the east begins to glow anew with the faint dawn of another cycle, and the old race, whose round has now been accomplished, is about to be succeeded by a race more perfect, more developed, wise and reasonable.

"There are indications that our epoch has seen the termination of such a planetary cycle as that described, and that a new dawn, the dawn of a better and a clearer day, is about once more to rise in the sacred East. Already those who stand on the hills have caught the first grey rays reflected from the breaking sky. Who can say what splendours will burst from among the mists of the valley westward, when once the sun shall rise again?

"Some of us have dreamed that our English Branch of the Theosophical Society is destined to become the ford across the stream which so long has separated the East from the West, religion from science, heart from mind, and love from learning. We have dreamed that this little Lodge of the Mysteries set here in the core of matter-of-fact, agnostic London, may become an oasis in the wilderness for thirsty souls,—a ladder between earth and Heaven, on which, as once long since in earlier and purer days, the Gods again may, come and go 'twixt mortal men and high Olympus."

"Such a dream as this has been mine; may Pallas Athena grant me, the humblest of her votaries, length of days enough to see it, in some measure at least, fulfilled!"

Mr. Sinnett then addressed the meeting, speaking for upwards of an hour and a-half. As the subject matter of his address is dealt with in another column, we refrain from further notice now. It was nearly midnight before the meeting closed.

MR. HUSK'S SÉANCES.—We are requested to remind the members of the C. A. S. that subscription séances are held with this medium every Thursday evening at eight p.m., at the rooms of the Association, 38, Great Russell-street. Tickets for admission, 2s. 6d. each, application for which should be made to Mr. T. Blyton, 6, Truro Villa, Station-road, Church End, Finchley, N., or at 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

PIONEERS OF THE SPIRITUAL REFORMATION.—We have been asked to announce that the subscription list to the initial volume of this series will close on August 30th, and that therefore, those who desire to possess the work will do well to communicate at once with the publishers, The Psychological Press Association. In making this announcement we may perhaps be allowed to mention that the book will contain biographical sketches of three of the foremost figures in what may we think fitly be called the Spiritual Reformation of the Nineteenth Century. These men—Mesmer, Kerner, and William Howitt—were typical of their respective schools of psychological science, and all three may be regarded as the most prominent figures in the mighty movement of Modern Spiritualism. In the sketch of Mesmer's life and labours will be included a large amount of matter new to English readers. It needs no recommendation of ours to assure our readers that this new book will be well worth perusal—that goes without saying as regards anything which comes from so graceful and facile a writer as Mrs. Watts. The publishers inform us that the scale of prices for subscribers and those who obtain the book after it is issued will be rigidly adhered to. Full particulars will be found in another column.

SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

SECOND SERIES.

This series of Spirit-Teachings, like the former, is made up of selections from a great mass which have been automatically written during a series of years. They are selected on no other principle than that of printing what has been valuable to the person for whom they were originally given, in so far as this can be done without trenching on what is merely of personal and private application. The latter consideration excludes a great mass of what would otherwise be interesting and valuable matter. The phraseology has been preserved, as far as possible, intact, names only being omitted. The series follows directly on the first, from which, indeed, it is separated only by the accident of its publication in another journal, and after some considerable interval of time. The publication is resumed in deference to many repeated requests.

M.A. (Oxon.)

No. XL.

[The subjoined communication was written eight years ago, and is an amplification of some previous attempts to give information in the circle. At the time it was given I had no knowledge of the technical terms of metaphysics, or to be accurate, no clear conception of its technical methods, and of the exact sense in which its terms are employed. It is probable, therefore, that that lack in my mind affects the form, though not the matter, of this message.]

The blessing of the All-wise rest upon you. We endeavoured to convey to you truth as far as you can grasp it respecting the origin of spirit. The essential parts of what was imperfectly said are as follows: Spirit, of which you know naught experimentally, is a substance known to us as really as it is unknown to you. Your senses are not made to take cognisance of it. It is too ethereal, and escapes your notice. You can only trace it in its effects. Rarely can you do that, for you are not yet acquainted with the laws which govern gross matter. You are ignorant of many qualities which matter possesses: you do not know the laws which govern its changes, transmutations, and conditions. Still less do you know the far subtler laws which regulate the relation between spirit and matter: the processes by which spirit deals with material objects: the power it possesses of transmuting its conditions, and even of suspending its existence as it seems to you.

To you matter seems solid, objectively palpable, and real. To us it is of all grades or qualities of existence; from that which is barely cognisable—as certain forms of material existence are only microscopically visible to your senses—through the various grades which are best symbolised to you as aërial, fluidic, and solid. Nor is this dependent on any actual change in the objects themselves. When we used the symbol of the microscope we did not intend to imply minuteness. We only wished to convey to you that, as there are forms of material life only cognisable by you with the help of the microscope, so there are conditions of matter which, though perfectly substantial to you, are not so to us; nay, are not perceptible, and this may be, and is, entirely independent of size: taking place in objects respecting the objective solidity of which you would smile if a doubt were suggested. The cause of this is that matter to us is not an objective fact. Spirit is the real substance. Matter is only one of the modes of its presentation.

If you analyse your conception of spirit you will find that you regard it as eminently unsubstantial, vapoury, and formless; it may be that mist will symbolise your idea. If we were to say that the table at which you sit is only substantial in so far as it is spiritual, we should convey to you an idea which would not be comprehensible to you. Yet such is the case. To you the material fibre is substantial and objectively real. To us it is the spiritual part that is real, the material only cognisable by those of us who have become accustomed to visit your earth. A change of state in you would produce a similar effect. At times when we have opened the spiritual senses you have seen as we see. Matter then is shadowy, and spirit is substantial. This, then, is the first point that you must bear in mind. Spirit is a substance having form and shape. So the spirit-world is real and substantial, surrounding and underlying this material world; organised of spirit substance in various grades and degrees from the most impalpable vapour up to the densest solidity.

The realm of spirit pervades your earth; animates all things; and gives to animal, and plant, and vegetable its real existence. You are so constituted as not to see this, save fitfully and by clairvoyance, that is, by the opening of one of the spiritual senses by which you can discern spiritual things. That

you do not always see it, is no proof that it does not exist. It only shews the imperfection of your senses, and the low plane of development which you now occupy. One day you will find that all that now seems real to you is only the shadow of the true : all that seems indisputably objective is only a phantasmagorical picture : all that seem drifting, airy, and uncertain is the true and the eternal, of which you only catch distinct glimpses as the mists that obscure your spiritual vision lift for a moment and shew you the distinct prospect. So may the traveller pause to view the fantastic grouping of the clouds that dip down far into the valley below him ; and as he amuses himself by watching their ever-varying shapes, and picturing to himself a story in their panoramic changes, lo ! the breeze drives them aside for a moment, and on his eye burst the massive pinnacles of the everlasting hills which these airy phantasies have hidden from his gaze. The things which he saw were temporal, the things of which he caught only a momentary glance are eternal. Only, good friend, our traveller knows that his mists and clouds are baseless and unsubstantial. You make the mistake of supposing the material part of your world to be real.

That which mankind has thought fit to regard as indisputably real and objective is precisely that which is assuredly phenomenal and unreal. The spirit is the life, the reality, the eternal and essential substance. No one of you, as we have before said, has ever seen a human being. You do but know the shell. You can analyse its wonderful mechanism, complex in its multiform variety, but you cannot set it going when once it has stopped. Its variety and complexity no more set it in motion than does the multiplication of wheels give motive power to a machine. When the spirit is gone the machine stops. It is the spirit that is the real man : and instead of speaking of man having a spirit, you should be more accurate, and speak of a spirit possessing a body. And just as spirit underlies man, so does it underlie and inform all matter. All forces that hold the worlds in place and carry them in their orbits, are spiritual. Every force in its last analysis is spiritual. Light, heat, magnetism, electricity, are only the outer coverings of one inner spiritual force, respecting the Protean action of which you have yet all to learn. The time is not yet come. Spirit underlies all, we say. Wherever matter is, there you may unhesitatingly assert the presence of spirit. All that you see is formed, energised, and vitalised by spirit. Its outer material form is only the imperfect representation of its true spiritual form, a rough cast, as it were. It is a material reproduction of a spiritual prototype.

The elements of matter can have, as you must know, no power to assume form and shape ; one of the essential qualities of matter is inertia. That your philosophers all admit. In its most subtle form it has absolutely no power of action. The most highly organised form of matter can no more act for itself than can the rock. The marble cannot roll out of the quarry sculptured in human form. The action of spirit must be brought to bear on it before that can be. Nor has law any more inherent power. Your statute books have no power to act. The worlds are not kept in their orbits by law, but according to law. The law is but the external expression of the energising force which underlies it. Those of your philosophers who talk thus of law, should, to be logically consistent, trust in the potency of a statute book, unadministered by any external power. Civil law, in the same way, is only the external expression of the rule and method according to which men act. The law is to the force which underlies it as the body of man to that which energises it. Both are spirit. And this spirit, remember, is substance. It is no abstraction, no impalpable force, but a real and essential substance, having power to grasp matter and wield it at will.

Wherever you turn you see evidence of spirit-action, from the worlds that roll in space to the tiny fern that grows at your feet. It energises all, and by a subtle process of chemistry to which your noblest efforts are puny and trifling, distils from dew and rain and air and light the delicious juices and fragrances, and moulds the lovely forms, to which you are so accustomed that you heed them little. Yet it is a truism to say that Nature makes the violet, the rose, the lily. Tell me, good friend, what is Nature, and what are her processes ? By what power is that fragrance distilled ? by what pencil was that petal painted ? who moulded that symmetric form ? You cannot answer. You know not. You have erected an idol and called it Nature, and you have labelled it with some formulæ and called them laws ; devices to conceal your ignorance. Nature is spirit, and her laws are spiritual. All your material substances, earth and air, water and fire, are the home of spirit

All your material forms, vegetables, animals, minerals even, are but crude disguises for spirit, the outer mask which encloses spirit. It were well that you ponder what has been said. We leave you now.

[On a subsequent day the communication was continued :—]

If you will bear in mind the point on which we have before insisted, much that would otherwise be hard of comprehension will be clear. Man is a spirit, and the spiritual holds together the corporeal. The fluctuating mass of atoms which form the physical body are kept in place and vitalised by spirit. When spirit is withdrawn they fall into corruption, moulder, and pass into other combinations. Spirit is the man ; and conversely man, by virtue of his being a spirit, dominates all creation. He is in advance of all, being endued with powers which other created beings do not possess.

Yes, it seems all to work in with an orderly process of development.

Yes, we have told you before, matter on your globe has gone through divers stages from crystallisation—the rudest form of organisation—up to man. The rock and the earth yield to the plant. Vegetable life supersedes mineral. Sensation added, a nervous system given, and another form of more highly organised life is found progressively, being developed from the lowest zoophite up to man. Each step is an advance on the last, and man crowns the labour of creation. You know of this. What we wish you to remember is that as spirit animates and energises all, so does it animate man : and that man differs in kind as well as in degree from all other entities by virtue of his Divine Soul. Here we pause, for we have completed one branch of our subject. Ponder what we have said, and you will find in it material for thought.

Yes, a good deal is familiar to me already, and it works in thoroughly with what is said in the Bible. What you and Magnus say throws much light on that book.

The spiritual meaning of the Bible is valuable. It is the literal interpretation that misleads.

DIRECT PRESCIENCE.

The following incident was told to me by the young lady herself and by the other members of her family, who were cognisant of it at the time it occurred, about seven years ago. There could be no question either of the truth of the narrator or of the clearness of her recollection. The occurrence is remarkable from the fact that the intimation of the scene she was about to witness, was conveyed without the intervention of dream or vision.

H. WEDGWOOD.

"I was nearly fifteen when the following event occurred to me. I had then belonging to me a tame siskin, to all appearance a perfectly healthy little bird. One night I awoke from sleep with a curiously strong impression upon my mind that my bird was dead. I was not conscious of having had any dream, but the impression was very strong, and a vivid picture was in my mind of my birdeage empty in its accustomed place in the dining-room window, with my mother and sisters standing round it. I had no doubt that my bird was really dead, and I went downstairs in the morning with a feeling of quite certain expectation, and saw without any surprise, standing in the window, the group, as I had imagined it, round the cage where my little bird had died in the night. I told them at once how I had known of this in the night, and that it was no surprise to me.

I have often had vivid dreams since unfulfilled, but this was not such a dream, and never again occurred to me.

July 17th, 1883.

M. L. S.M.

THE "ST. STEPHEN'S REVIEW" ON SPIRITUALISM.—The *St. Stephen's Review* of June 30th contained an article entitled "Spiritualism and Spiritualists," which was written in a very fair and temperate tone. The vast interest now existent in the subject is recognised, and the author comes to the conclusion that there must be something in it. The only error which specially calls for attention is the statement that "Spiritualism, occultism, mesmerism, and Maskelyne-and-Cook-ism are one and the same thing." As regards the Egyptian Hall conjurers this is certainly not the case. They perform their tricks solely by mechanical and other means, and any one who has seen their show and also witnessed the phenomena which take place at séances, will readily see why no comparison can be made between the two. The one is entirely different from the other.

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TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "Light." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their séances.

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Light :

SATURDAY, JULY 28TH, 1883.

R E V I E W .

SPIRIT TEACHINGS. By "M. A. (Oxon)" Author of "Psychography," "Spirit Identity," "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism," &c., &c. London : The Psychological Press Association, 38, Great Russell-street, W. C., and E. W. Allen, 4, Ave Maria-lane, 1883. 10s. 6d.

FIRST NOTICE.

"My thoughts being once seriously busied about the things that are, and my understanding lifted up, all my bodily senses being exceedingly holden back, as it is with them that are very heavy of sleep, methought I saw one of an exceeding great stature, and an infinite greatness call me by my name, and say unto me, 'What wouldest thou hear and see? or what wouldest thou understand to learn and know?'

"Then said I, 'Who art thou?' 'I am,' quoth he, 'Pœmader, the mind of the Great Lord, the most mighty and absolute Emperor.'"

These lofty, albeit quaint utterances from the second book of Hermes Trismegistus, might, with singular propriety, have formed an epigraph to the important work now under our notice. Its author, or more correctly speaking, its scribe, tells us that this volume "is the record of a period during which a spirit of a very lofty nature, calling himself 'Imperator,' was concerned with him."

The name and teaching of the spirit 'Imperator' are already familiar to the readers of "Light." The communications, however, which form the volume now issued by the Psychological Press Association, appeared originally in the *Spiritualist* newspaper. "They have been"—we are told—"subjected to revision by a method similar to that by which they were first written."

The Mode of Production

was as follows :—

"The communications which form the bulk of this volume," says "M. A. (Oxon)," in his introduction, "were received by the process known as automatic or passive-writing. This is to be distinguished from Psychography. In the former case the psychic holds the pen or pencil, or places his hand upon the planchette, and the message is written without the conscious intervention of his mind. In the latter case the writing is direct, or is obtained without the use of the hand of the psychic, and sometimes without the aid of pen or pencil."

"Automatic-writing is a well-known method of communication with the invisible world of what we loosely call spirit. I use that word as the most intelligible to my readers. . . . These messages began to be written through my hand just ten years since, March 30th, 1873, about a year after my first introduction to Spiritualism. I had had many communications, and this method was adopted for the purpose of convenience, and also to preserve what was intended to be a connected body of teach-

Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, His Divine Pymander, in seventeen books, translated formerly out of the Arabick into Greek, and thence into Latin and Dutch, and now out of the original into English, by that learned divine Dr. Everard. London : Printed by J. S., for Thomas Brewster, at the Three Bibles, in Paul's Church-yard, near the West End, 1877. [Book Second, called, "Pymander," p. 15.]

ing. The laborious method of rapping out messages was manifestly unsuited for communications such as those I print. If spoken through the lips of the medium in trance they were partially lost, and it was, moreover, impossible at first to rely upon such a measure of mental passivity, as would preserve them from admixture with his ideas. I procured a pocket-book, which I habitually carried about with me. I soon found that writing flowed more easily when I used a book that was permeated with the psychic aura; just as raps come more easily on a table that has been frequently used for the purpose, and as phenomena occur most readily in the medium's own room. . . . At first the writing was very small and irregular, and it was necessary for me to write slowly and cautiously, and to watch the hand, following the lines with my eye; otherwise the message soon became incoherent, and the result was mere scribble. In a short time, however, I found that I could dispense with these precautions. The writing while becoming more and more minute, became, at the same time, very regular and beautifully formed. As a specimen of calligraphy, some of the pages are exceedingly beautiful. The answers to my questions (written at the top of the page) were paragraphed and arranged as if for the press: and the name of God was always written in capitals and slowly, and, as it seemed, reverently. The subject-matter was always of a pure and elevated character, much of it being of personal application, intended for my own guidance and direction. I may say that throughout the whole of these written communications, extending in unbroken continuity to the year 1880, there is no flippant message, no attempt at jest, no vulgarity or incongruity, no false or misleading statement, so far as I know or could discover; nothing incompatible with the avowed object, again and again repeated, of instruction, enlightenment, and guidance by spirits fitted for the task. Judged as I should wish to be judged myself, they were what they pretended to be. Their words were words of sincerity, and of sober, serious purpose. * * * * I never could command the writing. It came unsought usually; and when I did seek it, as often as not I was unable to obtain it. A sudden impulse, coming I knew not how, led me to sit down and prepare to write. When the messages were in regular course, I was accustomed to devote the first hour of each day to sitting for their reception. I rose early, and the beginning of the day was spent, in a room that I used for no other purpose, in what was, to all intents and purposes, a religious service. These writings frequently came then; but I could by no means reckon on them. Other forms of spirit manifestation came too. I was rarely without some, unless ill-health intervened, as it often did of late years, until the messages ceased." The reader is told elsewhere that "M.A. (Oxon)," in order fully to abstract his mind from any conscious participation in the subject-matter of the "communication," was accustomed to read some book requiring close thought during the time his hand was used automatically by the communicating spirit.

There are further curious facts connected with the production of these "Teachings" which will find their parallel in the universal experience of "Psychics," in whom has been developed to any high degree the phenomenon of automatic writing—or drawing also, which is the picture-writing of the spirits, or teaching by ideo-graphs. "Imperator," we learn, never attempted personally to convey to his pupil the power of automatic writing. From him flowed the teaching, the ideas, the words—probably derived by him from a yet more interior source, still nearer to the sphere of "the mind of the Great Lord, the most mighty and absolute Emperor," as Hermes has expressed it, and whose name or nature "Imperator" appears to bear. "Rector," however, a spirit who was seemingly able to write more freely through "M. A. (Oxon)," and "with less strain upon him," acted as amanuensis to "Imperator." "At other times," we are told, and "especially since the production of the communications which form this volume, writings have apparently been given by a company of associated spirits who have made use of their amanuensis for that purpose." These facts are highly instructive in this connection.

The "Autobiographical" Element.

The volume consists of thirty-three sections or chapters, each one having affixed to it a short account of the occasion and circumstances connected with the production of the spirit-given communication which follows.

These affixes, records of very remarkable psychical experiences, and possessed of the peculiar interest ever attaching to the nature of autobiography, form an individual and important feature of the work. It is to these prefatory remarks that we

owe our knowledge of the great conflict long waging in the mind of the scribe. To "Imperator" had been assigned—as these pages testify—no easy task in the remoulding the very firmly fixed opinions of his charge—opinions cast in the orthodox mould of the dogmatic literalism of the highly-cultured modern theological mind.

The hardest of hard shells of educated prejudice—a wall as of a very Bastille of Literalism had to be broken down—and that by a superhuman power of combined strength and gentleness suggesting as a fit symbol the steam-hammer of Nasmyth, which with force to shatter tons of iron at a blow, yet holding in check its terrific strength, can softly break the shell of an egg. The Divine-leading being of the gentle and persuasive, and not of the aggressive force, as regards the breaking of the iron wills of men, "Imperator's" work was of the most patient and gradual. At length, however, the truth-loving, truth-aspiring inner-nature of the scholar is reached—the prison-house of his mind is broken through, a new light of perception arises for him: he recognises himself as hitherto—though nurtured in the high learning of the schools of the world, as having been blind and in bonds. From his mental eye-sight, now, however, fall the scales, and from his spiritual being the chains, and he has found himself at length seeing and free, a man inspired with the free-spirit, prepared in the school of the Spirit in his turn to become a guide to the blind and a liberator to the bound.

It is only through careful perusal of these interesting autobiographical portions of "M.A. (Oxon's)" book that an adequate conception can be formed of the great task performed by the spirit "Imperator," and this not alone in his especial charge, but also for those who peruse the teachings given through the hand of his pupil, who for their sakes, as well as his own, in truth, wrestled with an angel until the morning dawned.

Here and there, "few and far between," as veritable "angels' visits," in the unfoldings of religious literature has been given forth some book, cast out of the overflowing heart of the writer, a personal record of the mental earthquakes undergone during the process of death to some old faith, and birth into a new one. Such books have won for themselves a sacred niche for all time in the heart of humanity. They have met the needs of countless dumb, but not less earnest and afflicted wrestlers in the great struggle with Divine Truth. Their value is incalculable. They may be regarded as mirrors, wherein the wrestler, in the pauses of his own conflict, may see his countenance reflected and illumined by the uprising sunshine of hope. Such are the "Confessions of St. Augustine" in the old, Newman's "Apologia" in the modern days of the Roman-Catholic Church; the "Apology" of Barclay amongst the early Quakers; amongst the mystical writers the autobiography of Madame Guion, and the much less known autobiographies of the disciples of Nicholas of Basle.

In these world-famous books, however, with which, in some degree, not unadvisedly, we venture to associate this volume of "Spirit Teachings," we find the process of Regeneration wrought out by what we term intellectual reasoning or thought; or else brought about through the emotions of the heart. Writer and reader consider the process one that is simply effected by a far off and veiled operation of the Holy Spirit acting upon the mind and heart.

In the book of "M.A. (Oxon.)" we meet with an entirely new feature; and in this, to the Theologian and to the Psychologist, will consist the primal importance of the book. The process and the results have been the same in all these records of the birth into the new life; but, in the remarkable book now under consideration, we have the *modus operandi* clearly unveiled to us. In this record—as is the case in all the manifestations of spiritual phenomena of these modern days—when pursued carefully to their source—the machinery which sets in movement thought in the mind, and emotion in the heart, is distinctly made evident to us. Here we can behold at their labours the springs of influence—call them what you will—which are the bearers of ideas from yet more interior sources—the elaborators of the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of men. These supernal intelligences are shown face to face to us—the curtain being withdrawn between the two worlds. In this book we do not hear alone the soul or mind of man questioning and answering itself, as in a drama with one actor alone, but when the mind of the man questions—the answer comes clear and distinct from the spirit of "the mind of the Great Lord, the most mighty and absolute Emperor," speaking in the voice, or many voices, from the world of spirits, which we

clearly now perceive to environ and permeate the world of matter.

In its form of question of the pupil, and answer of the teacher, by which these dignified spirit-communications are conveyed to the world, some readers may be reminded of two renowned ancient religious poems: namely of the "Bahagavat Gita" of India, and the "Imitation of Christ" of Thomas A-Kempis, in its original poetical form in Latin. The mortal pupil Arjun questions the Divine Teacher Krishna, receiving answers from him, as man answering man: the humble monk "asks and receives" in the name of the Lord Christ; both receive spiritual communication of a nature accordant with the age and people amidst which they dwelt, nevertheless marvellously kindred in spirit to each other, and adapted to the universal needs of the spiritual-man of all ages and of all nations. So it is ever with the works worked by "The Spirit," since its laws are universal and uniform. No wonder, therefore, if the children of the Spirit proclaim their high lineage through their strong family likeness. "Imperator's" teachings, universal in their nature, are equally adapted to the mental requirements of their recipient and of the age in which they were received.

To the subject-matter of these "Spirit Teachings" we shall return in a second notice.

A STRANGE PHANTASM.

A curious adventure occurred to me in connection with Mr. Angelo, which I will mention here for the benefit of those who like ghost stories. In March, 1869, alighting from a train at Buckingham, I saw Mr. Angelo get out of a compartment next to mine and walk across the platform in company with a couple of young fellows who were very gay and frolicsome. One of them gave the other a push, upon which the latter said: "Isn't he behaving badly, Mr. Angelo?"

I intended to accost Mr. Angelo, but thought I would wait until he had parted with the two gentlemen, who were strangers to me. Presently they both entered a private carriage, which had come to the station for them, and drove off, but when I looked around for Mr. Angelo, I saw he had disappeared. I imagined he had entered one of the waiting rooms and lingered about the entrance of the station for a quarter of an hour, but he was not to be seen. I thought this rather strange at the time, for the Buckingham station on the arriving side had but one approach, and Mr. Angelo could not have walked away along it without being noticed by me.

In the following week I was at Harrow, and lunching at the King's Head with a young relative of mine, when the conversation fell upon fencing, and the boy casually alluded to his fencing-master as being the successor of Angelo, who was dead.

"Dead?" I exclaimed, "How very sudden. Why, I saw him not a week ago."

"You couldn't have seen Angelo, the fencing-master," answered the boy, "for he has been dead some years."

I really stared. If there had only been the evidence of my eyes as to Mr. Angelo's appearance on the platform of Buckingham station, I should have concluded at once that my sight had deceived me, but I had distinctly heard Mr. Angelo addressed by name. I had the plainest recollection of having heard one of the two young men, in whose company he was, say, "Isn't he behaving badly, Mr. Angelo?" On my return to town from Harrow I went to St. James's-street and had the fact of Mr. Angelo's death some years previously amply confirmed by Mr. McTurk. Here the story ends. Nothing ever came of the apparition I had witnessed. It brought me no portent; it had not been preceded by any thoughts about Mr. Angelo, and it was followed by no circumstances which can throw the faintest light upon it, so that of course I am bound to submit to the inference that I was labouring under an optical and acoustic illusion.

Still I am not convinced of this myself, in my private mind, and I have always thought of the incident as being one of those mysteries which are perhaps thrown into our lives to make us wary of scoffing too readily at strange things reported by others.—From "Seven Years at Eton," edited by James Brinley Richards.

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN SPIRITUAL JOURNALS.—For the convenience of readers, we may state that the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, *Light for All*, and other American and foreign Spiritual journals are kept on sale at the office of this paper.

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

A general meeting of the members of this Society took place on Wednesday, July 18th, at Willis' Rooms, King-street, S.W., Henry Sidgwick, Esq., President of the Society, occupying the chair. The attendance was fairly large and representative, what it lacked in point of numbers as compared with previous gatherings, being probably owing to the advanced state of the season. The proceedings were opened by the

President's Address.

Before the real business of the meeting commences, I should like to say a few words on an important aspect of the programme and work of the Society, which is liable, I think, to be imperfectly understood by friends no less than foes. Of the two, it is more important at present that our position should be as thoroughly and as widely as possible understood by our friends—I mean by those who are willing to co-operate with us; since, up to the present time, those hostile to our work have mostly delivered their criticisms from so very broad and distant a view of it, that it would be too sanguine to hope that they could be affected by any explanations of details.

The point to which I refer is our claim to be a scientific society, and to carry on our work in a scientific spirit and by scientific methods. Some not unfriendly critics have urged on me that this pretension is absurd: "You may be right," they say, "but at any rate it is a pitched battle between you and modern science; if you win, modern science will receive a hard blow." If this were true, I for one should entirely decline so unequal a struggle; but we hold it to be the reverse of true. We admit, of course, that the majority of scientific experts still keep aloof from us, and that the agreement of experts is the final test of the establishment of truths;—indeed we may apply to the scientific world what an eminent statesman has said of the political world, that the main duty of a minority is to try to turn itself into a majority. But this is just what we hope to do; not so much by direct controversy, as by patiently and persistently endeavouring to apply to the obscure matters which we are studying methods as analogous as circumstances allow to those by which scientific progress has been made in other departments.

And even now I conceive that the conflict between our view—either the general assumption on which we proceed or the particular facts which our committees claim to have established—and the views of the majority of scientific men, is really much less profound than many conflicts that go on within the field of recognised science. For there we continually see an interneceine struggle of opposing positive doctrines; but what we have opposed to us is not really any positive doctrine or proved method of another school of inquirers—much less any established, positive conclusion of science—but mere sweeping negations of persons who have mostly given no study or thought to the matters about which they deny; or, at any rate, a mere general presumption against what appears to have no affinity to facts already systematised. With the few positive contributions which physicists or physiologists have offered towards the explanation of the phenomena we are investigating, we have no conflict whatever. We recognise in almost all cases a partial truth in such explanations; what we maintain is that a careful comparison of them with the facts shews them to be inadequate.

A very different objection seems to be sometimes felt to our attitude of scientific inquirers by some of the persons who are in the best position for assisting our investigations. I mean persons who believe themselves to have certain knowledge on the most important matters on which we are seeking evidence, who do not doubt that they have received communication from an unseen world of spirits, but who think that such communications should be kept as sacred mysteries and not exposed to be scrutinised in the mood of cold curiosity which they conceive to belong to science. Now we do not wish to appear intrusive; at the same time we are anxious not to lose through mere misunderstanding any good opportunities for investigation: and I therefore wish to assure such persons that we do not approach these matters in any light or trivial spirit, but with an ever-present sense of the vast importance of the issues involved, and with every desire to give reverence wherever reverence is found to be due. But we feel bound to begin by taking these experiences, however important and however obscure, as a part of the great aggregate which we call Nature; and we must ascertain carefully and systematically their import, their laws and causes, before we can rationally take up any definite

attitude of mind with regard to them. The unknown or uncommon is not in itself an object of reverence; there is no sacredness in the mere limitations of our knowledge.

This, then, is what we mean by a scientific spirit; that we approach the subject without prepossessions, but with a single-minded desire to bring within the realm of orderly and accepted knowledge what now appears as a chaos of individual beliefs. In saying that our *methods* are scientific we do not of course pretend to possess any technical knowledge or art, needing elaborate training. "Science," as an eminent naturalist has said, "is only organised common-sense;" and on ground so very new as most of that is on which we are trying to advance, the organisation of common-sense, which we call scientific method, must necessarily be very rude and tentative. Indeed, the value to us of the scientific experts whom we are glad to count among our number depends much less on any technical knowledge or skill, than on the general habit of mind—what I may call the "higher common-sense"—which their practice of scientific investigation has given to them; somewhat greater readiness and completeness in seeing considerations and adopting measures which, when once suggested, are not only intelligible, but even obvious, to the common-sense of mankind at large.

For instance, nothing can be more obvious than the need of making as systematic and extensive a collection of facts as possible, partly in order to establish as fact what, we believe, can only be established by such an accumulation of evidence: and partly in order to obtain by classification a general view of the leading characteristics of the facts, so that we may be started in a right direction for investigating their conditions. But this need does not seem to be thoroughly understood. Thus a representative of the intelligent public has informed us that we have now given facts enough, and that the intelligent public now demands from us a satisfactory theory of them. Speaking for myself, I am afraid I must ask the intelligent public to restrain its impatience for a year or two more: a restraint which hardly ought to be difficult, considering the length of time for which it has remained in a state of contented nescience on these subjects. Again, a friend who has sent me a valuable first-hand narrative of Thought-transference at a distance, has thought it needful to apologise, on the ground that we "must be inundated with these stories." Well, it is in one sense true that we are inundated; the stream of them keeps flowing in more strongly than I had anticipated: but we wish to be still more inundated—the tide is a favourable one and it cannot rise too high for our purposes.

And this leads me to speak of the desire which the Council entertain to get as much co-operation as possible in the experimental work of the Society. We have endeavoured by the "Circular No. 1," printed in our last Proceedings, to stimulate the formation of local committees and independent centres of investigation in the subjects, especially, of Thought-transference and Mesmerism. I am sorry to say that this circular has so far produced little effect: I wish, therefore, earnestly to call the attention of our members to it, and emphasise our desire for the kind of co-operation which it suggests. Any great increase in the numbers of the committees appointed by the Council seems undesirable: but these committees would be glad to give the benefit of their experience, in any way that may be desired, to any local committees that may be started on an independent basis for this kind of research—or supposing such local committees to prefer complete independence, we should be no less glad to avail ourselves of their results. In short, if any member or associate of our Society feels moved to assist in any part of our work, and does not find that the circular to which I have referred gives him sufficient guidance as to the best method of doing this, he has only to write to the secretary of the committee whose sphere of operations interests him most, and the committee will do their best to find for him a useful line of co-operation.

I may mention that we had hoped, with a view of interesting our members generally in our work, to arrange for the exhibition of some mesmeric or other experiments at the monthly meetings of which one or two have been held during this season. Circumstances have, unfortunately, prevented this; but we still hope to carry out the plan when these meetings recommence after the long vacation.

I have said that we cannot have too many well-attested narratives or records of experiments, even with a view to establishing the general trustworthiness of the results. The reason for this lies in the impossibility, or extreme difficulty

of absolutely excluding, in any one case taken by itself, explanations of the phenomenon recorded which refer it to causes already recognised by science. This leads me back to the question of the scientific method of dealing with the evidence attested; as to which, again, we find ourselves in *prima facie* opposition with the majority of scientific men. But here, again, as I have said, the opposition does not arise from any general unwillingness on our part to accept the explanations of our opponents; on the contrary, we are especially anxious to give them all due weight in the collection and treatment of our evidence. We only refuse to admit them where we find that the hypotheses manifestly will not fit the facts.

Thus, e.g., before coming to our conclusion as to Thought-transference we considered carefully the arguments brought forward for regarding cases of so-called "Thought-reading" as due to involuntary indications apprehended through the ordinary senses; and we came to the conclusion that the ordinary experiments, where contact was allowed, could be explained by the hypothesis of unconscious sensibility to involuntary muscular pressure. Hence we have always attached special importance to experiments in which contact was excluded; with regard to which this particular hypothesis is clearly out of court.

Again, take Faraday's well-known experiments on table-turning. I have no doubt that Faraday rendered a real public service in preventing ignorant persons from supposing an unknown force to explain the turning round of drawing-room tables when a group sit down to it in an evening party. And if the eminent physicist had been able to explain in the same simple and effective way, the rarer but yet strongly attested cases in which tables are reported to have moved without contact, or to have risen altogether off the ground, he would have "exploded the whole nonsense of table-lifting." But we submit that it is not a scientific way of dealing with a mass of testimony to explain what you can, and say that the rest is untrue. It may be common-sense; but it is not science.

Here, however, our more careful opponents, when they cannot find a physical explanation for the facts related, fall back on various psychological explanations of the fact that they are related. They say that the reporters have been deceived by "conjuring tricks" or illuded by "expectant attention," or led into involuntary exaggeration from the impulse to entertain their hearers with marvels, or have laid undue stress on accidental coincidences, through oblivion or non-observations of instances on the other side:—or when there is nothing else left they simply say, with more or less polite circumlocution, that we must be telling lies.

Here, again, we admit that every one of the suggested causes—not excluding the last—has been, in the history of human delusion, a *vera causa* of marvellous narratives; and the whole detail of our procedure in the different departments of our inquiry is governed by the need of carefully excluding them. What we venture to think unscientific is the loose way in which our opponents fling them about, without any proper attempt to define the limits within which they are probable.

Thus, e.g., when a man pays a guinea to attend a spiritualistic exhibition in a room over which the recipient of the money has perfect control, it is reasonable to attribute to preparation and sleight of hand whatever of the results could be produced by a professional conjurer on his platform; but it is not, therefore, equally probable that similar results in a private dining-room are due to the hitherto latent conjuring powers of a strange house-maid. When a man goes to a house which he knows to be haunted it is not a noteworthy fact that he dreams of a ghost; or even if he lies awake at night in a nervous condition, he is likely to mistake the rattle and sigh of the wind for evidences of ghostly visitants; but it is not, therefore, plausible to explain by "expectancy" apparitions for which the seers are wholly unprepared, and which they at first take calmly for their relatives. When a marvellous story is told after dinner by a person who heard it from a friend of the brother of the man who was actually there, we may reasonably suppose that an indefinite amount of thrilling detail has been introduced in the course of tradition,—especially if the links in the chain of tradition are supplied by persons who are not accustomed to regard scientific accuracy as important in these matters—but it is not therefore legitimate to explain in this way a narrative which is taken direct from the diary of the original eyewitness.

Our endeavour, then, is primarily to collect phenomena, where these and similar explanations have at least a high degree

of improbability. In no case can such explanations be absolutely excluded—for all records must depend, ultimately, on the probity and intelligence of the persons recording them; and it is impossible for us, or any other investigators, to demonstrate to persons who do not know us that we are not fools or liars. We can only hope that within the limited circle in which we are known, either alternative will be regarded as highly improbable.

Reports having been read from the Committees on Mesmerism and Dreams, which, however, are not as yet ripe for publication,

Professor Barrett, F.R.S., presented to the meeting an account of some experiments in the interpretation of muscular indications, made by the Rev. E. H. Sugden, B. Sc.; also of some further experiments in Thought-transference by Messrs. Guthrie and Birchall, of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool; and the Hon. Mrs. Fox-Powys.

The last named lady had addressed the following letter to the Committee:—

"I send the results of a trial my husband and I had alone. To me it seemed like magic! We had tried, I think, three times before this, just for a short time, with indifferent success. I was the guesser, and he held my left hand with his right, and merely thought of a number. I sat with my eyes closed. It was the rapidity with which it was done astonished us—I cannot say, but the number seemed to flash *instantaneously* into my brain. In fact, so simultaneous was it that I began to think perhaps that I had flashed the number into Mr. Powys' brain *first*. However, when we reversed the operation and made my husband guess, he was not at all successful. With single numbers I only had one, and with double numbers two trials.

NO. THOUGHT OF.	FIRST TRIAL.	SECOND TRIAL.
3	...	—
2	...	2
4	...	7
6	...	—
5	...	5
9	...	9
3	...	3
8	...	8
58	...	24
36	...	36
27	...	72
69	...	28
100	...	100
42	...	42
55	...	55
22	...	79
38	...	38
30	...	42
22	...	120

which makes 10 right on the first trial out of 18; one right on the second trial, and one number reversed.

"We tried again next night, but only got five right on the first trial out of 20, and two right on the second trial. The secret of success the first evening I believe to lie in the fact that I felt *absolute* confidence in my power to guess correctly, and to this height of confidence I have never since been able to attain, and it was certainly lacking in the former trials."

The proceedings shortly afterwards terminated.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

Esoteric Buddhism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR.—In reference to the letter signed "G. W. M.D.", in "LIGHT" of this day's date, will you permit me to express the regret I feel that the writer has allowed himself to use language in speaking of the Indian Mahatmas which must deeply wound the sensibilities of all your Theosophical readers. Controversialists governed by good feeling, not to speak of good breeding, generally refrain from attempts to ridicule that which other men hold sacred, but "G. W." has attacked the esoteric doctrine in the spirit which animated the least respectable assailants of Christianity. I think all Theosophists who interest themselves in the current Oriental teaching will applaud the discretion I shewed in refusing to subject the portraits "G. W." mentions to his unsympathetic inspection. I cannot prevent

him from insulting a name we revere, since that has been put, by the publication of my first book, within the reach of his ungraceful pen, but I can keep pictures which are my private property from becoming the subject of inappreciative comment.

It is difficult to understand how any man of ordinary intelligence could, without intending to misrepresent the teachings of my recent book, have caricatured these after the manner of "G. W.'s" almost ludicrous epitome; but the letter before me is not worth serious reply in so far as it deals with intricacies of thought the writer has failed to follow, and is even less worthy of this in so far as the vulgarity of its tone here and there eclipses its other peculiarities. But it would be affectation to regard the initials used as disguising its authorship, and this deeply aggravates the offence against good taste involved in its allusions to the Arhat teacher who is generally regarded by Theosophists, both in this country and in India, as entitled to their earnest reverence. It is wrong for anyone to insult the reverential feelings of others, even in careless forgetfulness that such feelings exist, but it becomes disgraceful to do this when it is done deliberately, with full knowledge concerning the nature and diffusion of the feelings engaged.

A. P. SINNETT.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Will you allow me, as a fellow of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, to enter my humble protest against the superficial criticism upon Mr. Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism" by your correspondent "G. W. M. D."

"G. W.'s" letter is another proof of the danger of presenting spiritual truths to minds not sufficiently freed from the thralldom of personality to grasp great general principles.

The flippant tone adopted is an evidence, in my opinion, that your correspondent has mistaken his vocation, which should be that of a contributor to some comic serial, rather than that of a critic in matters so vast and deep as those contained in the book which he essays to review.

Notwithstanding the writer's modesty in "restraining his sentiments," his opinion of the work in question lies on the surface, viz., that because he does not understand it, therefore it must be nonsense, a dictum which I am afraid will have more weight with your correspondent than with myself, at least.

The calm, dignified, spiritual manner in which "C. C. M." treated the subject serves only to intensify the poverty of your correspondent's thought, and indicates how ill-qualified he is for the office which he has assumed.

At the risk of being classed by "G. W." in his category of "incorrigible Buddhistic and other lunatics," I venture to assert that in the philosophy which is now being unfolded by esoteric teachers through the Theosophical Society, I find the solution of more spiritual difficulties than in any other system; and whilst blessing Mr. Sinnett for striking the rock in the midst of the spiritual desert, I will not complain if, in assuaging my thirst at the life-giving stream, I am obliged to swallow foreign particles which, in a plethora of spiritual knowledge, I might feel inclined to take exception to.

I write simply as an individual member of the Society, without committing anyone else to my opinions, and am, yours truly,

EDMOND W. WADE.

Lee, July 21st, 1883.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—A letter from G. W. M. D. in last week's issue of "LIGHT," cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed and without a protest.

"G. W. M. D." shews from the tone of his remarks that his long association with a society which he now considers it good taste to ridicule, has not been the result of sympathy with the objects to which that society is devoted, and his unmeasured abuse of, and scoffing at, those gifted beings of whose teachings, I, and, up to the present, he also has been a recipient, strike his fellow students of the philosophy with surprise and indignation.

"G. W. M. D." considers the purity and elevation of the higher ones as a fitting subject for jest, and infers that those who reverence them are "incorrigible lunatics." Such may be the opinions and practice of the "higher minds of our Western civilisation," among whom, doubtless, "G. W. M. D." classes himself; but the whole allusion to the baths, fumigations, and glass-case does not shew either good feeling or intelligence, and is certainly not in accord with the sentiments one might expect to animate a member of a society having for its object the development of the principle of universal brotherhood.

F. ARUNDALE.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51 AND 53, MORTIMER STREET, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

That the controls of Mr. Morse should propose to speak upon "The true Eden" was sufficiently suggestive of doubt whether the Garden, so-called, was the place or the condition indicated, to prepare the audience of these rooms, on Sunday last, for the prompt discharge of that particular myth from their mental horizon. The historian may continue to indulge in speculation as to the geographical situation of the place, which may or may not have been in the mind of the Biblical writer; and in its symbolical meaning the story of the associated primitive innocence, and deplorable collapse, of its human tenants may not unprofitably exercise our imaginative faculties; but not as the true Eden.

This represents a condition of perfected existence, with its blissful surroundings, so far unlike the abode of an originally God-like being that its very beauty and sweetness will be the result of the struggle for happiness through knowledge, and an acquired purity of actual life, by man himself. The true Eden of absolute goodness has yet to be built up: it is in to sense a structure of the past, and unlike the fabled domain of innocence, will grow out of the badness of that past felt and resisted; and indicate, by its simple existence, that complete and final subjugation of the grosser, by the unfettered predominance of the higher qualities of Humanity.

The condition, and if we like so to speak of it, the place, having thus to be worked for, will be won only by collected wisdom, strength of mind, and universal exaltation of character, representing the development of the purposes of God by the conscious creatures of His will, as distinct from unfeigned because innate and uncontrasted goodness, located on the scriptural garden.

It is of real practical consequence to regard the position as demanding that men's lives shall be the expression of their highest principles, and that the true Eden should equally express the highest happiness of which man is capable upon earth, for until we have mastered the elementary conditions of a progressive system here, we shall find no heaven elsewhere. To labour for such an ideal is to secure fitness for its enjoyment. Complete success may be beyond the reach of the efforts of today or of to-morrow, but the earnest struggles of every day, wisely directed by acquaintance with the character of the need, will hasten the hour for its achievement. We were recommended to try a little self-examination—to ask, each of us: "What am I?" "Why am I what I am?" and "Being what I am is it the best that I can be?" for if there is a hell within us there can be no Eden outside of us.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," and we must be individually able to sustain the qualities of Eden life, the harmony, peace, and happiness which belong to and indicate that state of being, if we are ever to realise the beauty of that profoundly beautiful utterance.

The lecture for Sunday, the 29th inst., will be upon "Human Progress: its Source," and the evening of the 5th of August will be devoted to question and answer, the last occasion of the kind of the season.

LIVERPOOL.

In Rodney Hall, Rodney-street, on Sunday morning, July 15th, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten gave an inspirational oration, her subject being "The World of Supernaturalism." She rapidly sketched the supernatural gifts and powers which have been manifested amongst all peoples and in all times, and described the wonder-workers of India, the magicians of Egypt, the soothsayers of Chaldea, and the sybils of Greece and Rome. She traced the history of supernaturalism amongst the prophets and wonder-workers of Israel, claiming that the Spiritualism of the Christian dispensation and the apostolic period formed no hiatus in the chain of spiritual manifestations. Mrs. Britten then dealt with the history of supernaturalism in the Middle Ages, and described the gross ignorance that prevailed on the subject of witchcraft and sorcery. She urged that the discoveries of Mesmer threw the light of science on the world of supernaturalism, and that the development of modern Spiritualism supplemented and explained the supernaturalism of all past ages, and would prove the harbinger of promise that would ultimately unite the long-separated interests of science and religion. In the evening, Mrs. Britten spoke on "Ancient and Modern Freemasonry." The origin of masonry, she said, would be found in the worship of the power of nature. She alluded to the Hindoo, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman mysteries, and traced out their succession from land to land, declaring that the germ of these mysteries was preserved in the Jewish Kabbala. She then enlarged upon the building of Solomon's Temple, and described how the Jewish monarch, unable to find any wise men of the nation competent to interpret the mysteries of the Kabbala, sent to Hiram, King of Tyre, for cunning workmen instructed in the mysteries of building such a temple as she held would correspond to the grand lodge of the universe. Mrs. Britten then dealt with the building of the temple, the institution of three degrees, the legend of the master mason's degree, and the four subsequent degrees which culminated in the royal arch. The proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to the lecturer.—*Liverpool Mercury.*

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Section I.—Special efforts to spread progressive truth at this special epoch thwarted by the Adversaries—Obstacles in the way—The efforts now made greater than men think—Revelation: its continuity—Its deterioration in men's hands—The work of destruction must precede that of construction—Spirit guides: how given—Spirits who return to earth—The Adversaries and their work—Evil—The perpetuation of the nature generated on earth—The growth of character—Each soul to his own place, and to no other—The Devil.

Section II.—The true philanthropist the ideal man—The notes of his character—The true philosopher—The notes of his character—Eternal life—Progressive and contemplative—God, known only by His acts—The conflict between good and evil (a typical message of this period)—These conflicts periodic, especially consequent on the premature withdrawal of spirits from the body: e.g., by wars, suicide, or by execution for murder—The folly of our methods of dealing with crime, &c., &c.

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Section VI.—The Derby Day and its effects spiritually—National Holidays, their riot and debauchery—Spirit photographs and deceiving spirits—Explanation of the event: a warning for the future—Passivity needed: the circle to be kept unchanged: not to meet too soon after eating—Phosphorescent lights varying according to conditions—The marriage bond in the future state—The law of Progress and the law of Association—Discrepancies in communications.

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The touch we have often felt; the voices of some we have often heard. And yet the question is still asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Some do. Is it scientific to conclude from that that *all* do?

It is the mission of Spiritualism to establish this fact, and it is gradually being accomplished.

But I know there are many hungering and thirsting after such phenomena as I have described, and which now mingle with the daily life of many. It is only in *family* life such pure phenomena can be secured; but with a medium like Mr. Husk, who is now sitting weekly with members of the Central Association of Spiritualists, even visitors, if true and honest, can see enough to confirm what is now so often recorded, as will also be the case with our friends at the Antipodes who are looking forward to the arrival of Miss Wood. The conditions for such manifestations are so subtle that I doubt if scientists will discover their existence satisfactorily for many a long day, while those on whom the light has shone can rest and be thankful. No so-called exposures touch their serenity. They *could* explain even *them*, but *not* to the fools who expose!

MORELL THEOBALD.

July 12th, 1883.

MR. IRVING BISHOP AND SPIRITUALISM.

To the Editor of "Light."

Sir,—In your issue for February 17th, I took the liberty of criticising a certain performance given by Mr. Bishop at Liverpool, in which he was supported by the Rev. J. H. Skewes (a violent opponent of Spiritualism), and many other local gentlemen of repute. Mr. Bishop pretended to have accepted a challenge that had been made him by a certain Mr. Ladyman for the sum of £10, the terms being that he (Bishop) should find a pin that had been hidden by the challenged in a certain part of the city. And he was reported to have successfully won the wager. The local Press was unanimous in declaring it to be a death-blow to Spiritualism, and seemed to enjoy the reputation Mr. Bishop was earning for himself as a "thought-reader." The evidence was so weak that I wrote in your columns as follows:—

"I could not help feeling that, considering the advantages Bishop was to derive from the experiment, there is another and very simple explanation than that of the pin having been found by 'thought-reading.' Indeed, the explanation is so obvious that no one will be mystified as to what it is. But assuming it to have been a genuine exhibition of Bishop's mental power, I shall be pleased to make the following offer:—I will place in the hands of the Psychical Society the sum of £10, and that Society shall choose a committee of six of its members, to mark and hide a pin in a similar manner to that adopted by Mr. Ladyman. Bishop shall allow himself the like conditions of being blindfolded and a copper wire; and if he, under these circumstances, will guide any one of the six gentlemen to the spot where the pin is hidden, I will forfeit the sum above-named, and will publish the result in the newspapers. Should the Psychical Society and Mr. Bishop consent to this, and the latter succeed, he will at once see the importance it will give him in having been successful with a committee of scientific gentlemen, whose testimony no one will doubt, besides having clearly demonstrated that his power of thought-reading has stood the calm and deliberate test of a body of men who have already satisfied themselves of the existence of such a power."

To this challenge Mr. Bishop made no reply. Nor indeed did I expect any, as I felt certain that his powers could not stand the test of a crucial investigation.

I am glad, therefore, to be able to call the attention of your readers to an article which appeared in *Truth* of June 21st, by which Mr. Bishop's system of "thought-reading" is completely exposed; and I quote the following from *Truth* as proving that my criticism was not unwarranted:—

"At Liverpool there is a certain Whiteley, an owner of a waxwork exhibition. Bishop having quarrelled with Uffner (his

partner at Manchester and elsewhere), entered into a partnership with Whiteley, I suppose on the same terms as he had done with the former. The first object, of course, was to attract attention to his entertainment. It was therefore announced that a gentleman had bet Bishop £10 that he would not find a pin concealed within a certain distance of the Adelphi Hotel. The experiment was to take place at mid-day; Bishop was to have a bandage round his eyes, and then, as a further precaution, a black bag was to be passed over his head (the bag is an old trick—no sooner is the bag put on, than the performer is able to push up the bandage without detection), and he was to be attached by a wire to the wrist of a local dentist of the name of Ladyman. The experiment was 'successful.' Bishop ran through the street, walked into an hotel, went out on the balcony, and found the pin there. A few days later on, two men called on me. One gave the name of Whiteley, the waxwork man, and the other that of Blunt, a conjurer at Liverpool. They said that they had seen in *Truth* that Mr. Bishop's pretensions had been ridiculed, and that they were prepared to produce evidence to shew how he had tricked the public at Liverpool. I did not pay any great attention, but told them that when they gave me the evidence I would look into it. I heard no more of them, but as they had told me that either they were going, or had gone (I forgot which), to see Mr. Maskelyne about the matter, I thought that I would call upon that gentleman and ask him whether they had ever been to him. Mr. Maskelyne said that they had, and that they had related the whole circumstances in regard to the Liverpool transactions to him. Whiteley had told him that the trick of the pin at Liverpool had been arranged beforehand; that although the man who made the bet with Bishop had lost it, and consequently ought to have paid the £10 to the charity, in reality Bishop and his friends had paid it. Mr. Maskelyne shewed me a letter to him from this Whiteley, in which he says, 'So far as I am personally concerned, I am willing and prepared to make a public statement as to the fact of having myself paid a share of the bet.' I asked where Whiteley was now? Mr. Maskelyne replied that he had lately met him, and that he had learnt that he had made up his differences with Bishop, and was again either his partner or his *impresario*. Another fact in regard to Mr. Bishop's Liverpool experiences is, that the 'subject' there was not a person either of repute or independence. At the séance, a man stepped forward and, producing a note, which he said Bishop could never have seen, asked him to read it. This Bishop did. The man was one Corner, a clerk in a Liverpool bank. It can be proved that just before the meeting he had been with Bishop, in his private room."

If the writer's allegations are true, a clear case is made out against Bishop's pretence to possess the faculty of reading thoughts; and his reluctance to place himself under conditions that preclude fraud and collusion is, without doubt, most prejudicial to his claim.

In view of the large sums that have been offered him should he succeed in reading the number of a bank-note, it would almost be ridiculous to further call his attention to my challenge, but it will hold good until such time as Bishop may care to accept it.

I am surprised that Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, who is usually so clear in his observance of facts, should state in your columns that he could account for Bishop's cabinet performance at St. James's Hall in no other manner than by spiritual aid. Such admissions are not only damaging to the cause, but lead the public to believe that there can be no difference between the trickery of the professional conjurer and the phenomena observed in the presence of a medium. For Mr. Wedgwood's information I beg to say that the trick—for it is nothing else—is an old one, and was resorted to by Annie Eva Fay when in England, and more recently in America, when I had an opportunity of discovering how it was done; and I shall be happy to inform Mr. Wedgwood how he can perform the same feats himself after a little practice, although for want of practice I could not hope to do so with the same agility as the exposed exposé, Mr. Washington Irving Bishop.—Yours faithfully,

Onslow-gardens, S.W.

W. E.

To CORRESPONDENTS.—Much is unavoidably crowded out this week.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

Esoteric Buddhism.

To the *Editor* of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In three recent numbers of "LIGHT" we have had three eulogistic reviews from the thoughtful and metaphysical pen of "C. C. M." and perhaps some of your readers may not object to a criticism of Mr. Sinnett's book from a European and arithmetical standpoint.

In the first place it has seemed to me that the title of the book is a misnomer.

By the term Esoteric is generally meant the sacred innermost, and thus Esoteric Christianity means the innermost secret of that soul which is *One* in spirit with the Christ as the Logos or operative wisdom of God. And as God thus is the cause and centre of all things, a system like Buddhism, which denies the existence of a Creator or spiritual First Cause, cannot, in the true, that is the Theistic sense, be esoteric.

A mere secret is not esoteric, and one might as truly speak of an esoteric police, or esoteric drugs, as of an esoteric cosmogony; and as Mr. Sinnett's book is almost entirely a theory of the evolution of man out of matter, and a supposed history of man's growth in various planets, it is no more entitled to the term esoteric than are the theories of Andrew Jackson Davis or those of "The Vestiges of Creation."

Mr. Sinnett's book is given as the secret teachings of the Occult Brothers through their representative, Koot Hoomi; and it is stated that their secrets are stupendous, and are now for the first time in the history of the human race, given to the world by the author.

Moreover, it is intimated that the revelation is infallible, and that as it is only by receiving infallible truth that the soul can be saved, we run a great risk if we reject the teaching now so generously given to us; and, indeed, one is reminded of the words of the Athanasian Creed when it informs us that, "Except ye thus believe without doubt ye shall perish everlasting," with this extra terror, that whereas the Pope of Rome who thus threatens us is a man visible in the flesh, the secret Popes who now threaten us are invisible Esoteric Brothers.

Regarding this Koot Hoomi, it is a very remarkable and unsatisfactory fact that Mr. Sinnett, although in correspondence with him for years, has yet never been permitted to see him.

The excuse is that his magnetism is so refined that he could not safely descend into the plains of India, and run the risk of infection from the low magnetism of ordinary mortals.

If this be a fact then he cannot truly be an adept—that is, as is claimed, one who can control the forces of Nature—for if he could, then he could easily surround himself by a curtain of invisible but impenetrable magnetic aura.

Even a common mesmerist can make himself so positive that he not only associates with the lowest human beings, but while he expels the evil magnetism of their diseases he himself lives safely in the midst of it.

How comes it, then, that Koot Hoomi is so feeble, and why does he not resemble Jesus, who associated with lepers and maniacs, and expelled their demons by the word of His power?

But if Koot Hoomi cannot safely descend to the plains, why does he not invite Mr. Sinnett to visit him in the hills, and after purging him with fruit and baths and fumigations, and being "ever careful that he did not come between the wind and his nobility," hold from his tripod sweet and psychic converse with him, and indeed why not, if need be, isolate himself from the sinner of the West by means of a glass case?

But although Koot Hoomi has not shewn himself to Mr. Sinnett in the flesh, he has sent him three portraits, one by Madame Blavatsky, and two taken by a kind of spiritual or occult photography.

These portraits the devotees have been permitted to look on, but not to touch, but I as one altogether born of the devil have not been permitted to behold them.

This, I think, is a mistake, for just as some second-class saints have been made by gazing on halfpenny prints of the Mother of God, so who can say that if my good friend had permitted my sceptical eyes to look on the Divine face of Koot Hoomi I might not forthwith have been converted into an Esoteric Buddhist?

I dwell at the outset on this Oriental practice of secrecy, because although I believe many of those we are in communication with in the East are noble beings, yet I know that Secrecy and Cunning are ever twin sisters, and hence it has always appeared to me childish and effeminate in any Western or Eastern society pretending by secret words and signs to enshrine great truths behind a veil, which is only useful as a concealment of ignorance and nakedness; and as secrecy is so often a sign of weakness, I will venture to assert that if these Occult Brothers came out of their caves and mixed with mankind we should find them merely attenuated ascetics, inferior in matters of science, wisdom, and knowledge to the higher minds of our Western civilisation.

But as to this grand secret regarding man and the universe now for the first time in the history of the human race revealed by the Occult Brothers through Koot Hoomi, it is briefly as follows:—

1. "There is no God personal or impersonal,"* and "no Creator, because no physical effect can arise but from a physical cause," and thus man, body, soul, and spirit, is an evolution from matter.

2. There are seven planets through which man passes by successive re-incarnations in the progress of his evolution.

These seven planets have each evolved seven races, and these seven races each seven sub-races.

Thus we have 7 planets \times 7 races \times 7 sub-races, that is $7 \times 7 \times 7 = 343$ stages of existence, and as each man and woman has been twice incarnated in each stage we have $343 \times 2 = 686$ as the number of re-incarnations man has had in the seven planets, and as I understand, this process has been performed seven times in the "spiral" evolution of the planets. We thus have $686 \times 7 = 4,802$ as the number of existences a human soul has in its progress towards a final Nirvana.

3. Three of these seven planets are the Earth, Mars and Mercury, the four others are of so refined a material as to be invisible.

4. At all his 4,802 deaths man passes into a paradise of happiness and rest, "a world of effects," the average life there being probably 8,000 years before each re-incarnation.

Thus the life of man in this world of effects which is called Devachan, is $4,802 \times 8,000 = 38,416,000$ years.

This seems a very long time, but in a conversation I had on the subject, I was informed that although the Brothers were shy as to giving exact quotations in figures, it was yet understood that the probable duration of a finished soul on the planets was more like 70,000,000 of years.

5. The life in Devachan is one of happiness, but of a dream-like nature, during which the inhabitants do little or no work either for themselves or others.

6. The ultimate destination of the soul is Nirvana, where all the past lives of 70,000,000 years become as one remembrance—the soul being in unity with the infinite but yet a distinct individuality.

7. All do not reach Nirvana, for while some can find into it a short cut by occult lines, others, even after 70,000,000 years, are too wicked to go there, and those are cast into the "dust bin" of our system, the moon, where they drag out a miserable existence and rapidly disintegrate and perish for ever.

This is a brief epitome of Esoteric Buddhism as I have learned it from the book and from private instructions, and I find the revelation is received by three orders of mind in three very different ways.

First. I find some who "read the revelation with breathless attention, and receive it in wonder and awe."

Second. I find those who say, "The author of this cosmogony, whoever he may be, is evidently as mad as a hatter."

While a third order of mind says: "We have great suspicion of all schemes made, cut and dry, by the multiplication of sevens, and it seems to us that Koot Hoomi is trying to impose on Sinnett 'an awful cram.'"

For myself I restrain my sentiments, and only beg to be permitted to question the statements, philosophically and arithmetically.

First, then, we are told there is no God and no Creator, for all things were evolved out of matter, the body, soul, and spirit of man being but three stages of matter in evolution. And we are further told that there is no Creator "because no physical effect can arise but from a physical cause."

(Continued on page 333.)

* *Theosophist*, May, 1882, p. 6 (supplement).

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TO CONTRIBUTORS.

Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "Light." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their séances.

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Light:

SATURDAY, JULY 21ST, 1883.

SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE BHAGAVAT GITA.

An Address by the REV. S. E. BENGOUGH, M.A. at Cavendish Rooms, on Sunday, July 15th, 1883.

"The foundations of the earth are out of course," said the prophet; signifying, no doubt, by that striking image that the social and religious condition of his country was in a thoroughly disorganised state, going to pieces, and falling into confusion, as a city might do under the influence of an earthquake. This prophetic language is eminently fitted to describe our own age and condition, and it becomes more so every day. The foundations of our earth are out of course. It is no use to deny, or shut our eyes to, a fact which is patent to every one of ordinary intelligence who is not blinded by prejudice or use and wont. There is no single tradition of the past which commands universal or even general reverence. There is no moral or religious axiom of 100 years ago which is not called in question by some of our most honoured and deepest thinkers.

Such a state of things is, in many respects, a very unhappy one. Individuals and nations must have some truths, some firm convictions to build their life upon. And, now-a-days, half our time is spent in arriving at the comfortable assurance that all which our grandfathers believed was a delusion and snare; and then, when we have begun to see our way to a few practical relative truths, we have to die, or, as we Spiritualists think, go into another state of existence. To those who may be troubled with any such reflections as these, allow me to suggest a source of consolation. After all, the doubts which have been cast upon old authoritative notions have been caused, in most cases, by scientific discoveries, and increased clearness of vision in almost every province of inquiry. And to one of these discoveries I would refer as a consolation for the shortness of our individual lives on earth. I mean the fact—which becomes more certain every day—that man has been upon the earth some hundreds of thousands of years. And if our own personal existence is short, our inherited faculties, and even some fragments of history—taking that word in its widest sense—go back to a quite indefinite past. It is true, indeed, that what is commonly called history is but of yesterday. Of the enormous period during which man has been upon this planet we have only records of 5,000 or 6,000 years, and those consist of the legendary story or the skeleton annals of half-a-dozen countries on the shores of the Mediterranean—countries that in an ordinary map of the world may be covered with three or four fingers. And this, forsooth, is universal history. Universal, I suppose, as to time and space in relation to our globe. The appellation is, really, too absurd.

Indian Literature.

China, Egypt, India, at the earliest period of recorded history, had already attained a highly developed state of civilisation—on which we ourselves have made but slight advance. And of the countless ages preceding that epoch we know almost nothing—only a few archaeological facts concerning mound and pyramid builders, lake-dwellers, and so forth. About the time referred to there already existed in India some religious books—the four Vedas, or words, written in a beautiful dialect, that has been for centuries a dead language. These Vedas, with the Upanishads, Puranas, and two prodigious epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, form alone a voluminous literature, bespeaking intellectual capacity equal perhaps to that of any era that succeeded. On these sacred writings is based the most ancient ecclesiastical system of India, represented by Brahminism, of which the long pre-Christian Buddhism was an offshoot.

The Mahabharata seems to have been written after the first three Vedas and prior to the fourth. It is a gigantic production, and is said to contain 220,000 lines. It is divided into eighteen books, and in about the centre stands the Bhagavat Gita.

The Bhagavat Gita is generally allowed to be the deepest and most interesting portion of the Vedic literature. It is allegorical to begin with, and susceptible of more than one interpretation; but it is quite certain that it states and professes to solve a great variety of metaphysical and moral problems, and I think I am justified in describing it as the oldest psychological treatise in existence. In the miserable chaos of religious and philosophical scepticism in which the world is writhing at present, it may have a tranquilising effect on some minds to go back to this ancient document, and breathe for a while that serene atmosphere of thought that brought with it peace, and strength, and purity to our Aryan ancestors 3,000 years ago.

Bhagavat Gita.

This poem has a dramatic form throughout, but there is scarcely any action, and it consists almost entirely of a dialogue between two interlocutors. In the first scene two armies are facing each other ready to commence a battle, which is to determine the question of sovereignty. The armies are composed of descendants of one ancestor through two brothers named Dhreitarashtra and Pandu. Pandu was the younger brother, and had obtained the right of sovereignty on account of the incapacity of his elder brother, who was blind. The younger brother, however, resigned, and after the lapse of years his descendants, the Pandus, contended with the Kurus, the descendants of the elder brother, for sovereignty: finally, obtained the victory and acquired possession of the kingdom. This episode has its parallel in the Hebrew story of Esau and Jacob; the posterity of the latter—the younger of the two brothers—becoming the heroes of the after part of the drama.

Now for the interpretation. By the two families, Kurus and Pandus, of one tribe, are to be understood the various forces of passion and intelligence in the one tribe of mankind—or, if you please, the individual man. The microcosm man, just as the larger world, is for ever the battle-field of vice and deceit against truth and virtue. Man is born undeveloped. Passion—like the elder brother, Dhreitarashtra, and Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage—is spiritually blind. Vice and deceit obstruct the gates of intelligence. The moral principle also is held in a state of siege. The theatre of this drama, then, is none other than the soul of man—the spiritual kingdom that is within us, the scene of such awful conflicts of contending powers. But my audience need not fear that they will have paraded before them a lifeless train of abstract virtues and vices, like the *dramatis personae* of the old Morality Plays. Religious idealism has seldom soared higher than it does in this poem, and for equal beauty of moral feeling we should have to go to Thomas-a-Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*. But there is, moreover, here a depth of theosophical speculation which makes one giddy to contemplate.

So much for the general character of the poem. Let us look into it closer. The whole work has been divided into three sections. The first is purely practical; the second, theological; and the third, metaphysical. There are three speakers, Sanjaya, a messenger—who simply introduces the narrative, like the chorus in a play—Arjuna, and Krishna. As is well known, Krishna was supposed to be the eighth incarnation of Kishna, who is the second in order of the Hindoo Trinity. Arjuna represents embodied humanity. Shortly after the opening, Sanjaya says:—Now when Arjuna beheld the Dhartarashtras arrayed for battle, and that the flying of arrows had commenced,

he raised his bow, and addressed these words to Krishna : "Draw up my chariot, O Eternal One, between the two armies, that I may examine these men, and see with whom I have to fight." And Krishna, being thus addressed by Arjuna, drew up that best of chariots.

Surely it is remarkable that the second person of the Hindoo Trinity should be acting here as Arjuna's chariooteer. As the action proceeds we find that he assumes the part of revealer of all mysteries, and is himself revealed as the central life of all creation. It should be noted that Arjuna is addressed by three different titles : Son of Kunti, Son of Pritha, and son of Bhárata. These refer respectively to the animal, the human, and the divine principle in man ; and they apparently answer to the terms : Son of Mary, Son of Man, and Son of God, as applied to Jesus the Christ.

The first scene is entitled Arjuna's Despondency ; and this despondency leads to all the dialogues that follow. Arjuna is perplexed and distressed to see in the ranks of those opposed to him numbers of his blood-relations and others whom he respects. He knows not how to act.

"Alas!" he says, "we have determined to commit a great crime ; since for the desire of sovereignty we are prepared to slay our kin. Better were it for me if the Dhartarashas would slay me harmless and unresisting in the fight." This is Krishna's answer : "Thou hast grieved for those who need not be grieved for, but thou utterest words of wisdom. Know this, that that by which all this universe is created is indestructible, and these finite bodies belong to an eternal, indestructible and infinite Spirit. Therefore, fight, O Bhárata ! The spirit is not slain when the body is killed. As a man abandons worn out clothes and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn out bodies. The soul is eternal and capable of going everywhere. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it. The soul in every creature's body is always invulnerable. And considering thine own duty" (as a kshatrya), "thou are not right to waver. For there is nothing better for a kshatrya than lawful war. And if thou wilt not join in this lawful fight, thou abandonest thine own duty and glory, and contractest a crime. And to a noble man infamy is worse than death."

Spiritual Principles.

Such is the practical exoteric teaching of the earlier portion of this drama. It comprises the following principles :

1. The spiritual and eternal origin of all phenomena.
2. The duty of faithful, calm submission to the unknown and the inevitable, and the brave fulfilment of relative obligations.
3. The pursuit of tranquillity of soul by the attainment of spiritual truth.
4. The disregard of all selfish considerations or hope of reward here or hereafter.

The succeeding portion of the poem consists chiefly of religious and philosophical illustrations of these fundamental principles.

The method prescribed for attaining to spiritual truth and perfection may be termed the doctrine and discipline of the Yogis. It is probable that for thousands of years this sect of ascetics has had its representatives in India. Two years ago there appeared in the *Theosophist* an interesting account of the different stages through which an initiate in this order passes. It is reported that at an early period of his experience the Yogis' limbs are benumbed. Then follows a sense of utter exhaustion. Afterwards he becomes "master of the vision." He sees into men's hearts, he hears the most distant voices. Next he feels himself to be so subtle that he can transport himself where he will, and like the Devas, see all without being seen. Finally, he becomes the Universal and indivisible Word, he is the Creator, the Eternal, exempt from change ; and become perfect repose, he distributes repose to the world.

The spiritual principles rather than the practical precepts of Yoganism are given in the Bhagavat Gita.

Krishna says to Arjuna : "The devotee who, freed from sin, proves constant in his vocation, enjoys eternal happiness, and is conjoined to the Supreme. He sees that all existent things are centred in the Life Divine. For Me he sees in all that is, and all created things in Me. He worships Me as present in all things that are, and even while on earth he dwells in Me."

Such words prepare us to enter on the more distinctly religious portion of this wonderful poem. And our time is so limited that we will pass at once to the heart of it, to a canto which might be entitled "A Beatific Vision, or the Transfiguration of Krishna."

Arjuna thus addresses Krishna : "In loving kindness great to me thou hast in words imparted much concerning that which is the inmost principle of Life in all the worlds and spheres. But now, O Thou who art the first of forms in human shape divine, I am most wishful to behold in clearer light Thy higher form."

Krishna makes answer, and then Sanjaya, the narrator, continues :—

"Now when the Lord had finished speaking to Arjuna, forthwith the Mighty One revealed His glorious countenance and form, which shone with radiant light, crowned with a brilliant diadem, appareled with celestial robes. The splendour of that glorious One was such as if a sudden blaze of light should issue from a thousand of meridian suns at once. And thus to Pandu's son the God of gods His presence did reveal. It seemed as if the universe itself was comprehended in that one majestic form. And thereupon the wealth-despiser, stretching forth his hands, the palms conjoined, with reverence most profound bowed low his head, and spake these words :

"O Mighty One, within that form Divine,
In which Thou dost present Thyself to me,
I see a countless crowd of angel-forms,
And myriad shapes of life.
I see Brahma upon his lotus throne
With the seven ancient ones.

"O mighty Lord of all the universe,
Thou art the sole and self-existent One.
And Thou art worthy to be praised and loved.
Thou art the central and exhaustless Fount
From whom are born all worlds that move in space.
Both sun and moon reflect as mirrors bright
The light that issues from those lustrous eyes.

"O Thou, who art the senses' conqueror,
All worlds rejoice with joy exceeding great
When they receive what flows from Thy abode.
Thou art the great Creator of the earth,
And everything that lives and is thereon !
Thou art the Generator of the air, the stars, the fire ;
Hail ! hail to Thee ; a thousand times all hail !

"And now, O Mansion of the universe,
Appear to me again in other guise.
The same I saw before, with triple crown,
And staff, and discus held in both Thy hands."

(*The change in the Divine manifestation takes place, and ARJUNA proceeds.*)

"O Thou, to Whom the prayers of men ascend,
Now that I see Thee in this placid form,
In human shape Divine, I am composed,
And to my former state again return."

I should say that I have followed Mr. William Oxley's translation of this passage as given in his "Philosophy of Spirit," a work to which I am greatly indebted. But I have toned down much of the imagery in this vision, as in its entirety it is too orientally magniloquent for English taste. What I have retained expresses many grand ideas. Krishna, in his human form, is represented as the object of worship to all mankind. In his symbolical transfiguration he becomes the embodiment of all the vital energies of creation. He is described as the originator of all worlds, the stars of heaven, and our sun among the rest.

Both sun and moon, it is said, reflect as mirrors bright the light that issues from those lustrous eyes.

Almost all historic religions are, as is generally known, traceable to sun worship. But there is more than sun worship here. The sun himself is but the reflection of the glory of deity.

The philosophical portion of this poem is a sort of didactic inference from what precedes. It essays to unfold the nature of life, of consciousness, and the inmost principle—the soul, which is described as having "hands and feet, with faces, heads, and eyes in every part, and sits the central power in all. Endowed with vast intelligence, it comprehends the universe."

It is afterwards said :—

The soul, that inmost principle within all forms of life, is called the guide, preceptor, witnesser, sustainer, and the mighty God. And he who comprehend these three—the soul, which is the inmost principle ; the spirit, which enshrouds the soul ; and body, with its qualities, whatever path in life he takes, no more regeneration needs.

We are told that three principles are active in embodied men—brightness, impulse, and darkness.

The fruits of brightness are called purity and holiness, those of impulse are anxiety, and those of darkness ignorance. If,

when the hour of dissolution comes, the principle of brightness is matured, the spirit will ascend to spheres where dwell the pure and perfect ones. And should it leave the outer frame when impulse is predominant, it joins the company of those who delight in active work. But if the frame should be dissolved when darkness is predominant, the spirit goes to spheres where dwell the earth-bound ones.

My nature, pursues Krishna, is approached and found when these three principles are made subservient. Then the spirit is released from future birth and death, old age and pain, and feeds on heavenly and angelic food.

Arjuna asks : "What are the signs, O mighty One, by which this conquest can be known? What course of life doth such a one pursue who would overcome these?" Krishna replies. "When brightness, impulse, darkness act in such a one, O Pandu's son, he hates them not; nor longs again for them when they have disappeared. He is neither agitated nor wavering, because he knows these principles can only act upon his most external form. He is contented in himself, and is the same in ease and pain. He values neither lands nor gold nor jewels, which are nought to him. His bearing is the same to all, be they his friends or enemies. In all he undertakes he is free from thoughts of self-aggrandisement. These are the signs which mark the one who has overcome these qualities. And he is made conformable to me and shares in my prerogative. I am the heaven of heavens, ambrosia, incorruptible, eternal, law, and order—bliss that is intense and aye endures."

Mr. Oxley remarks—I think very justly—that the concluding sentence gives the key to this profound drama. Even Krishna, or "the Holy One," is but a personification of the powers of the human soul. He is a representation of the states which a full regeneration opens, or, in plain words, the consciousness of life through all the three degrees, celestial, spiritual, and natural. Anyone who can apply this description to himself or herself will know who and what Krishna, and Christ, and Osiris really are—not historical persons of a bygone age, but life principles within ourselves.

Indian Philosophy and Judaism.

Now that I have laid before my audience the leading features of this venerable psychological treatise, I must venture to say how I think it may be utilised at present. Of course it cannot be adopted in its entirety as a guide to us. We live in a different age; our atmosphere of thought, our social, climatic, and ethnological conditions are very unlike those of the author of the Bhagavat Gita and his contemporaries. Yet what may be called the Christianlike tone of this drama is very remarkable. It is true that we have there no ghastly dogmas about men being under the curse of an angry Creator, and so on. But we have in Krishna a personification, as a Divine humanity, of the central universal life. Something like that we meet with, too, in St. John's Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles; but in the Sanscrit drama we have more psychology proper, and less of religious theosophy. There is a more philosophical, scientific spirit in the Indian than in the Jewish mode of looking at the universe. Looking at the universe, did I say? When did the Jew or the Christianised Jew ever do this? His universe was a crystalline vault that moved round him every twenty-four hours, with the sun fixed there to give him light by day, and the stars and the moon by night.

The Jewish sacred books, no doubt, in their fundamental elements rival in antiquity the Vedas themselves. They, too, contain the oldest symbolism in existence, and, here and there, a spiritual sublimity that has rarely been surpassed. But if we do not recognise that those books are allegorical, mystical books, the literal sense of which is often contradictory, grossly sensual, and misleading, we sink below the level of hair-splitting Jewish Rabbis. An unreasoning acceptance of a fancied Divine and verbal inspiration is not a condition of child-like simplicity—that has its beauty—but one of mental dotage, which is pitiable, only pitiable, whether exhibited by some poor Salvationist狂人 at the street-corner or by an Archbishop of Canterbury. We owe much to the Jewish nation, and their history has been such that they can well afford to treat with contempt the derisive criticism of the prejudiced and ignorant. The Jew has his distinctive virtues, and individuals of his tribe have attained to intellectual eminence. But that is no reason why we of Teutonic race, with 2,000 years of development since the Jewish nation reached its highest altitude, should be content to sit, like open-mouthed children, at the feet of Syrian devotees and visionaries, or astute, semi-enlightened Jewish scribes.

The Jewish Yoke.

We are Jew-ridden on our Stock Exchange, and that is enough in a commercial country like ours. That is the Jew's proper sphere. But in the name of all that is just and true, I say let us shake off the Jewish yoke from our philosophy and religion. Let us no longer be Jew-ridden in our temples, whether it be the grandest of all temples, our own souls, or the star-studded vault of heaven, or some less imposing structure, from that great sepulchral cathedral of St. Paul's downwards.

In achieving this happy emancipation, which is approaching every day, we have not only many "vested interests" to contend against: we have an enemy nearer home, in our own narrow, English cast of mind, and in the inherited prejudices and superstitions of a thousand years, which have become bone of our bone, and almost part of our intellectual nature. We should not be so Jew-ridden as we are, if there were not in our national character something of the Jewish type, enriched and ennobled it may be, but Judaic still. Of course I don't refer to the nonsensical theory about a blood-relationship between Jews and Englishmen; I mean a purely ethical kinship. Our English pluck, so distinctively a national characteristic, answers to the proverbial pertinacity of the Jew. The Jew rules to-day half the money-markets of Europe; and English commercial genius has made some call us a nation of shopkeepers. Our formal Pharasaic Sabbath-keeping, and this wearisome Parliamentary oath business, is all Jewish. There is nothing Christian or rational about it. In a word, our affinity with the Jew—at once our intellectual weakness and our moral strength—lies in the excess of our personality, or rather our personal consciousness.

We English are each a little island in our little selves. Our religion is for the most part English morality intensified, not spiritualised. The God of England, when it is not gold, is a national deity. "O Lord our God arise! Scatter our enemies. Confound their politics!" (In the Transvaal and elsewhere.) What a deity that would be that backed up English politics! But the worst of it is, we carry all this into our theories of the other world. We would perpetuate there our coarse moralities—our skin-deep domestic relationships. Our sweet personality is so dear to us that sooner than lose any fragment of it, we are content to import half the unreality and twaddle of this world into the next. It may be that for some indefinite period the transient relationships of blood or moral affinity continue to affect us after that mysterious change called death. But surely there has been in the theories of many religious thinkers, Spiritualists especially, a disposition to attach too much importance to that merely moral, societary, inherited personality which pertains to us as pilgrims through this troublesome world. What I would urge is that the spiritual individuality of a man is something which lies below the surface, something to which his outward moral character, which is visible to the world, and may be inscribed upon his tombstone, is but the matrix, and a most imperfect index.

"We are spirits clad in veils,
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communion fails
To withdraw the shadowy screen."

A Spiritualist's Difficulties.

It seems to me that our knowledge of others and their knowledge of us, here in this gross artificial surface state of existence, cannot be perpetuated—except in rare cases—in the next state of being. There may indeed be, in exceptional instances, such depth of affection and sympathy between different individualities as shall survive the disintegration of death itself, but I do think that Spiritualists are disposed to generalise about such things too hastily and too confidently.

I have been a Spiritualist twenty years, and remain one to-day. I have read a small library of books on the subject, and have indirectly learned very much by the study of it. I confess, however, that I do not seem to know much more of the future life now than I did at the beginning, or much more than may be gathered from that Bhagavat Gita of 3,000 years ago. I said that I do not know, but I am very thankful for the suggestions of possibilities which have come to me from behind the veil, the food for imaginative feeling and speculative thought.

Addressing myself especially to Spiritualists I would ask if their experience too, fairly faced and considered, has not been discouraging in this respect. Of course, if we choose to pin our faith or confine our attention to one particular class of seers, or mediums, or forms of manifestations, we may succeed in draw-

ing up a tolerably consistent theory as to the spiritual conditions of the other life. But if we compare the varying statements of twenty seers, of as many countries and religious creeds, the impression left upon our mind is likely to be very confusing. Even in the most reliable cases the subjectivity of the medium and the character of the surrounding spiritual atmosphere appear to be modifying elements almost impossible to eliminate.

Swedenborg was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest of spiritual seers, but no one who is not the narrowest of New Church men will deny that the famous Swedish mystic unconsciously Swedenborgised a large proportion of his memorable relations, and what is true of Swedenborg is certainly true of much smaller men. Hundreds of mediums on the Continent, in France, Italy, and Spain, have endorsed the re-incarnation doctrines of Allan Kardec. And how many Catholic, Shaker, Mormon, or Indian mystics have made revelations confirming their respective creeds! What conclusions shall we draw from such an endless variety of conflicting revelations? Must we not feel, first of all, that we have to deal with a most complex and perplexing subject? Not only so; but no amount of purity of intent, self-sacrifice and extreme devotion, to the highest ends is a sure protection against illusion. Take, for example, the circumstances which attended the production a year ago of that voluminous mass of absurdity called "Oathspee; or, The New Bible." It is a book which, beyond all question, came directly from spiritual sources wholly independent of the volition or normal intelligence of the medium. This man was subjected during its production to a most severe and saintlike ordeal. But what unperverted and cultivated mind could read that book without ineffable disgust and tedium?

Practical Conclusion.

Perhaps I may differ in opinion on many points from most of those whom I have the honour of addressing. And pray, friends, do not think that I speak dogmatically, or fancy my own judgment infallible. I have said already that I feel we are dealing with a very difficult subject, on which it is far more easy to point to rocks ahead than to indicate the right course to follow. For many years it has been my conviction that the crying want of our time, not only in dealing with Spiritualism but with everything—education, politics, religion, sociology—in everything, I say, our crying want is a science of human nature. The study of psychology, normal and abnormal, may perhaps do more than anything else to throw light upon such a science. But then our investigations should always aspire to something of scientific method and spirit. We should be satisfied with no doctrine which does not possess the stamp of universal order. This intellectual spirit is the "hall-mark," so to speak, which we are bound to look for and to honour. Professor Huxley once said, "If the facts of the Spirituslist are facts I have no interest in them." No doubt he meant that the facts were so abnormal that they could not be related with others, and take their place in the scientific commonwealth; and therefore had no worth to his methodic mind. I think Professor Huxley was very ill-advised in saying that, but I can understand and can respect his feeling.

In conclusion, allow me to sum up in a few words the gist of this address. It is this—that the most important truth which spiritualistic phenomena appear to me to teach is, not something concerning our condition hereafter, but that now, in our garb of flesh, we are essentially spirits with transcendent spiritual powers, of which mere scientists know nothing, and—*qua* scientists—can know nothing, for they belong to quite a different plane of existence from that on which scientists work. I believe that these spiritual powers, normal as well as abnormal, are our glorious privilege and distinction as human beings. Conclusive evidence has been placed within our reach that we are related to a spiritual universe in one sense at least, as being real and actual, higher than the heavens and lower than the hells of our greatest poets. Our reason and imagination can give us intuitive consciousness of this tremendous verity. Spiritualistic phenomena thrust it home to our very sensos.

Revelations of our spiritual surroundings shew us that we can, if we choose, live now in Heaven or in Hell; that is to say, related to, in sympathy with, and inspired by, a substantial, though ideal, world of harmony, truth, and happiness, or discord, falsehood, and misery. If we are wise, we shall act accordingly.

The sun of popularity sometimes shines upon a flower which prematurely opens its buds and discloses all its glowing beauties, but expires amidst the chilling frost of night.

Correspondence.—(Continued from page 329).

On this statement being made, I asked if the motive power possessed by the human will was material, and I was answered, "Yes, the will is only transcendental matter in motion!"

But I would ask, "Is self evolution possible or conceivable? For how is it possible that a lower can rise to a higher—except there be a pre-existing higher to rise to? For instance, how can the hod-man ascend to the top of the house without a pre-existing ladder? or the balloon ascend to the clouds except there be pre-existing strata of air on which, step by step, to ascend? And by what conceivable power could matter ascend in the scale except it ascended by, or to, a something other than itself? or how could the soul come from that matter which has no soul? or be born in matter except God breathed into matter? or how could it ascend except there was a higher than itself—a God who drew it upwards?" To all this it was replied, "These are difficulties, but not beyond occult wisdom and knowledge to solve!"

Then, again, that man has existed for, say, thirty or seventy millions of years, and yet has not an atom of remembrance of all this, is, to me, a statement the refutation of which does not require a moment's reflection, and no conceivable quantity of esoteric talk or number of Esoteric Brothers could possibly convince me that it was true.

Then, as to the moon being the "dust bin," as I was told, into which are cast all the souls of the incorrigibly wicked, the statement would be received as a joke were it not that I was solemnly informed that it was a fact, and perhaps it may be admitted that the moon is as good a place as any other for incorrigible Buddhistic and other lunatics; provided it is found large enough: although it is certainly uncomfortable to find the place so near our earth.

But to return to our arithmetic. If, as we are told, all souls are re-incarnations, and no new souls are created, there being a fixed number of souls, as there is a fixed amount of force in the universe, then I wish to know where the original souls came from before re-incarnations began, and if it is replied they were evolved out of matter, then I would ask why it is impossible for this process to operate now? But as we find, the population of this globe is continually increasing, there having been a time when probably there were only 100 human beings on the earth; if so, whence have come the 1,500 millions now here? If to this question it is replied they have come from other planets, then I would suggest that those other planets must be rapidly getting empty.

But the greatest arithmetical difficulty remains; for if souls on an average dwell in Devachan 8,000 years after each death, and before each re-incarnation, then as the average duration of man on earth is only about fifty years, 1,600 souls must enter Devachan for every one soul returning thence to a planet, and, if so, in a very few years, all the inhabitants of all the planets must have disappeared.

Although if we admit an unlimited period, during which Devachan must have accumulated an incalculable number of souls, there would thus be a sufficient nursery for all the re-incarnations; but still an ever-increasing number of souls in Devachan, and an ever-decreasing number on the planets, and this difficulty is, I understand, attempted to be met by the statement that some of the planets are empty.

Concerning these planets, we are told that the Earth, Mars, and Mercury are three of them, the other four being invisible owing to their rarity of texture.

On this statement two things strike us—first, that the two grandest planets should have no connection with man, viz., Saturn and Jupiter; second, that there are four invisible planets.

Concerning these four invisible planets we must be permitted to express a doubt, until their existence is proved, because however refined their texture may be it can scarcely exceed that of the tails of comets, of which some one has said that, if condensed, their matter might be put into a moderate-sized box.

Lastly. We are told that there are millions of planetary spirits who are so powerful that they could dissolve and reconstruct a planet.

If so, is it inconceivable that there may be one supreme spirit over all those millions, and that he may be in the place of the personal God of this planet—not as the creator of the planets, but as created by the planets—and thus an exemplification of how the Divine law has been in these days turned upside down, and now reads: "Parents, obey your children"?

And so it appears that Christianity has been tried and is found wanting, that it has become effete, and must pass away and give place to this sublimo Esoteric Buddhism.

True, it is admitted there are a few who teach an Esoteric Christianity almost as good as this Esoteric Buddhism; but "C. C. M." says that "the interior of Christianity is to be reached, if at all, not by, but in spite of, the authorised teaching."

If by authorised teaching he means that of Church dogmas, his assertion is not entirely without foundation. But the Christian recognises no infallible authority save that of the teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, and in these records, I maintain, and in these only, are to be found all which is perfect in morals and in religion.

"C. C. M." seems to believe that the doctrine of good works is a characteristic exclusively of Buddhism as distinct from Chris-

tianity—apparently forgetting that not only the moral teaching, but the entire life of Jesus, as our example, was one of good works continually, and to a degree beyond that of all other beings who ever lived on this planet.

Buddhism teaches good works as the way to Nirvana, but Christ shews that good works are dead, except they be done in the love of God, and hence the difference in the grand result of Christianity as compared with Buddhism.

We are told that there are 500 millions of Buddhists. True. But of these, 400 millions are Chinese, a people steeped in an isolated selfishness and in the most stupid forms of superstition and sensuality, and governed by a code of laws enforced by the most fearful cruelties.

Again, of the Japanese, the second greatest Buddhist people, Miss Bird, who lived amongst them, tells us that although they have many good qualities, they are yet as a people devoid of all religion and all morality.

Buddhism as exemplified and taught by Gautama was a great reform on the manners of his age in India, but it has not given to the Western world one new idea of importance to man.

It has not during two thousand years produced one man of eminence or genius. It has produced no poets, no musicians, no men of science, and no practical philanthropists. It has not conferred one intellectual or physical benefit on mankind. It has entirely failed and become dead because it has ignored the one fountain of all life, the living God.

Unitarian Christians during the last two hundred years, by their steadfast refutation of all hard dogmatism in theology, and by their continual assertion that in a morality founded on the love of God and man consisted the good of Christianity, have had a great influence on the Church doctrines of the present day, as witnessed by Canon Farrar's book on "Eternal Hope" and its widespread acceptance.

But Unitarianism, although in part the doctrine of the morality of Jesus, is not essentially Christianity, because it has failed to comprehend the doctrine of the esoteric Christ.

That doctrine has always been exemplified in the lives of the Christian saints and is now beginning to be evolved more widely, and when known it will be seen not only to contain all which is truly philosophic in Buddhism, but to have as its essence that love of God, so entirely unknown to Buddhism, but without which the highest evolution is impossible, and before which all lower forms of morality and religion must inevitably wither and become extinct.

G.W., M.D.

"Nineteenth Century Miracles."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—As I venture to hope that my projected work on "Nineteenth Century Miracles" may be considered as of some personal interest to every earnest Spiritualist, especially as it aims to be an exhaustive manual of reference, and a record of one of the most wonderful and momentous movements of human history, so I hope you will not deem it out of place if I ask of your courtesy to make an announcement which may promote the conditions upon which *alone* my work can go to press in England. I have concluded, for the benefit of that posterity to which I can confidently bequeath my present undertaking, to send down with the record, some of the worthy effigies of those who have faithfully laboured in the spiritual vineyard; in a word, I am endeavouring to procure a large number of such illustrations as will add tenfold value and interest to the volume in question. Permit me to add that although this course will greatly increase the expense of publication, no additional charge will be made to the subscribers, who will all receive illustrated copies on the terms announced in the advertisement, namely, 12s. 6d. per single copy, or £2 10s. for five copies. To non-subscribers after the publication, the price will be 15s. for illustrated copies and 12s. 6d. for plain ones. I hope this announcement may prove satisfactory to the kind friends who have already sent in promises of support, and induce others to *hasten* in following their example. Life is short, and time is passing rapidly. There are few of us who have no pressing need to *set their house in order*; I, at least, am one who have heard the call, and must obey.—Yours faithfully,

EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN.

The Limes, Humphrey-road,
Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.
CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51 AND 53, MORTIMER STREET, REGENT
STREET, LONDON.

We had the great pleasure on Sunday last, at these rooms, of listening to an address from Mr. Bengough, at once practical and scholarly, upon the spiritual lessons conveyed by some of the oldest of the Indian Scriptures, the general subject being specially illustrated by a critical examination of the plan and purpose of the Bhagavat-Gita.

As the full text of this discourse is published in another column we prefer to refer to that as really the only adequate form for securing a due appreciation of its comprehensive grasp, earnest purpose and literary skill.

The lecture was preceded by readings from the Bhagavat Gita, and from the Epistle to St. James, of the Christian Scriptures; and followed by the anthem, "Like as the hart."

A clairvoyant present affirmed the presence of a large number of Indian and Chinese spirit forms on the platform, and described them as gesticulating freely round and about Mr. Bengough.—S.B.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

On Sunday, July 1st, "T. C. E." delivered an Address at Weir's Court, in the course of which he said:—

We may well be patient with orthodox friends, with Positivists and Atheists, when we see a man so learned and liberal as Mr. John Morley, M.P., shewing such strength of ingrained prejudice, and such ignorance of the hidden springs of life which "shape our ends rough hew them as we may."

In his interesting book, "Voltaire and His Times," Mr. Morley writes of Rousseau in the following disparaging strain: "Rousseau at the very first step affirms! He, a philosopher, credits himself with succeeding at the very first in what philosophers have always reproached divines with doing. That is to say, in believing himself necessarily in the right, and repelling beforehand the objections of all gainsayers as irrelevant."

You will here observe that Mr. Morley is rather warm on Rousseau because the latter is on good terms with himself, "affirms" somewhat hastily, believes in his own philosophy, and makes statements not altogether acceptable to the author of "Voltaire and His Times."

Now let us turn over a few leaves of this interesting, but somewhat negligently written book, until we arrive at his criticism of Socrates. What has he to say of this ancient telephonic mind? a mind through which the stored up wisdom of past ages was transmitted to humanity without stint and without price. Remember that John Morley—honest John, I may say, for I believe him to be one of the foremost men in England—reprobates affirmation. He would have men *thinkers*, not dogmatists, and would, moreover, in his more lucid intervals, ask us to clothe ourselves in mantles of Christian charity, or, which is the same thing, in garbs of good-nature. He writes thus: "Returning now to the true Socrates, what next shall we say of the familiar spirit of which he was only, he would say, the pupil and interpreter? If he believed in it, what shall we think of his reason? If he did not believe in it, what shall we think of his sincerity?"

In other words, Mr. Morley, utterly blind to events happening under his very nose; oblivious to Biblical phenomena; uninfluenced by the writings of Cicero, Plutarch, and others; disregarding the high esteem that Plato and Zenophon had for their old master; putting on one side with irreverent haste and negligence the long-sustained and universal belief in the strength and skill of Socrates' reasoning powers, and in his innate independence of character and love of honesty, Mr. John Morley, a comparative youth at the time this passage was written, presumes to say that—Socrates was either a fool or a knave!

Now I ask you all to study the life and character of Socrates as portrayed by his pupils, Plato and Zenophon; then to the best of your abilities strive to make yourself acquainted with the capabilities of Mr. John Morley; then, free from bias, and with philosophic calmness, determine for yourselves whether Socrates was a fool, or Mr. Morley a dunce, for at one of these conclusions the facts of the case compel us to arrive.

For my part, I have never swerved from the belief (the belief of ages) that in Socrates we see the father of European philosophy, a mind, vast and pellucid as a lake, compared to which Mr. John Morley's is but a puddle by the wayside.

Mr. Morley would have added to his reputation as a philosopher if he had avoided the fault he reprobates in Rousseau. Men of "light and leading" should be more careful. Their cue is taken by smaller men, who, unable of themselves to originate an idea, fall down and worship the idol that kings of literature set up, and preach sermons from texts that are utterly false, and unpardonably foolish.

We know that Socrates, Jesus, Paul, Fox, Wesley, and other great and inspired religious teachers, have uttered statements too unfamiliar, and too opposed to orthodox modes of thought, to be acceptable to ordinary minds, or rather, to men of only normal experiences. But it should be known and remembered that these great men were subjected to influences of a divinely spiritual character, and none were more conscious of this than they themselves. One and all recognised that they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance—as their Father directed them to speak. In other words, Divine afflatus fell upon them, surrounded, and sustained them, and under its influence they spoke as man never spake before; they spoke with unequalled fire and energy, and with just such affection as was peculiar to their natures. Is it to be wondered at that the consciousness of the mighty sustaining power about them gave to their souls a feeling of deepest humility, moving them to declare that of themselves they were nothing; they were but instruments, voices, or the Word, of the Infinite Spirit of Nature. How can we obtain wisdom from the viewless, inconceivable personality of Deity except it be through a finite soul, who is, for the time, His word or voice?

The excuse, then, we are willing to accept for Mr. Morley is his ignorance of the world's psychological experiences; and the same excuse may reasonably be urged for atheist and other writers, who ridicule inspiration, healing by laying on of hands, and other spiritual gifts.

TESTIMONY TO PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

The following is a list of eminent persons who, after personal investigation, have satisfied themselves of the reality of some of the phenomena generally known as Psychical or Spiritualistic.

N.B.—An asterisk is prefixed to those who have exchanged belief for knowledge.

SCIENCE.—The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, F.R.S., President R.A.S.; W. Crookes, Fellow and Gold Medallist of the Royal Society; C. Varley, F.R.S., C.E.; A. R. Wallace, the eminent Naturalist; W. F. Barrett, F.R.S.E., Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science, Dublin; Dr. Lockhart Robertson; *Dr. J. Eliotson, F.R.S., sometime President of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London; *Professor de Morgan, sometime President of the Mathematical Society of London; *Dr. Wm. Gregory, F.R.S.E., sometime Professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; *Dr. Ashburner, *Mr. Rutter, *Dr. Herbert Mayo, F.R.S., &c., &c.

*Professor F. Zöllner, of Leipzig, author of "Transcendental Physics," &c.; Professors G. T. Fechner, Scheibner, and J. H. Fichte, of Leipzig; Professor W. E. Weber, of Göttingen; Professor Hofmann, of Würzburg; Professor Perty, of Berne; Professors Wagner and Butleroff, of Petersburg; Professors Hare and Mapes, of U.S.A.; Dr. Robert Friese, of Breslau; Mons. Camille Flammarion, Astronomer, &c., &c.

LITERATURE.—The Earl of Dunraven; T. A. Trollope; S. C. Hall; Gerald Massey; Captain R. Burton; Professor Cassal, LL.D.; *Lord Brougham; *Lord Lytton; *Lord Lyndhurst; *Archbishop Whately; *Dr. R. Chambers, F.R.S.E.; *W. M. Thackeray; *Nassau Senior; *George Thompson; *W. Howitt; *Serjeant Cox; *Mrs. Browning, Hon. Roden Noel, &c., &c.

Bishop Clarke, Rhode Island, U.S.A.; Darius Lyman, U.S.A.; Professor W. Denton; Professor Alex. Wilder; Professor Hiram Corson; Professor George Bush; and twenty-four Judges and ex-Judges of the U.S. Courts; Victor Hugo; Baron and Baroness von Vay; *W. Lloyd Garrison, U.S.A.; *Hon. R. Dale Owen, U.S.A.; *Hon. J. W. Edmonds, U.S.A.; *Epes Sargent; *Baron du Potet; *Count A. de Gasparin; *Baron L. de Guldenstubbé, &c., &c.

SOCIAL POSITION.—H.I.H. Nicholas, Duke of Leuchtenberg; H.S.H. the Prince of Solms; H.S.H. Prince Albrecht of Solms; *H.S.H. Prince Emile of Sayn Wittgenstein; Hon. Alexander Aksakov, Imperial Councillor of Russia; the Hon. J. L. O'Sullivan, sometime Minister of U.S.A. at the Court of Lisbon; M. Favre-Clavairoz, late Consul-General of France at Trieste; the late Emperor of *Russia and *France; Presidents *Thiers and *Lincoln, &c., &c.

Is it Conjuring?

It is sometimes confidently alleged that mediums are only clever conjurers, who easily deceive the simple-minded and unwary. But how, then, about the conjurers themselves, some of the most accomplished of whom have declared that the "manifestations" are utterly beyond the resources of their art?—

ROBERT HOUDIN, the great French conjurer, investigated the subject of clairvoyance with the sensitive, Alexis Didier. In the result he unreservedly admitted that what he had observed was wholly beyond the resources of his art to explain. See "Psychische Studien" for January, 1878, p. 43.

PROFESSOR JACOBS, writing to the editor of *Licht, Mehr Licht*, April 10th, 1881, in reference to phenomena which occurred in Paris through the Brothers Davenport, said:—"As a Prestidigitator of repute, and a sincere Spiritualist, I affirm that the medianimic facts demonstrated by the two brothers were absolutely true, and belonged to the Spiritualistic order of things in every respect. Messrs. Robin and Robert Houdin, when attempting to imitate these said facts, never presented to the public anything beyond an infantine and almost grotesque parody of the said phenomena, and it would be only ignorant and obstinate persons who could regard the questions seriously as set forth by these gentlemen. . . . Following the data of the learned chemist and natural philosopher, Mr. W. Crookes, of London, I am now in a position to prove plainly, and by purely scientific methods, the existence of a 'psychic force' in mesmerism, and also the individuality of the spirit in Spiritual manifestation."

SAMUEL BELLACHINI, COURT CONJURER AT BERLIN.—I hereby declare it to be a rash action to give decisive judgment upon the objective medial performance of the American medium, Mr. Henry Slade, after only one sitting and the observations so made. After I had, at the wish of several highly esteemed gentlemen of rank and position, and also for my own interest, tested the physical mediumship of Mr. Slade, in a series of sittings by full daylight, as well as in the evening in his bedroom, I must, for the sake of truth, hereby certify that the phenomenal occurrences with Mr. Slade have been thoroughly examined by me with the minutest observation and investigation of his surroundings, including the table, and that I have not in the smallest degree found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus; and that any explanation of the experiments which took place under the circumstances and conditions then obtaining by any reference to prestidigitation is absolutely impossible. It must rest with such men of science as Crookes and Wallace, in London; Perty, in Berne; Butler of, in St. Petersburg; to search for the explanation of this phenomenal power, and to prove its reality. I declare, moreover, the published opinions of laymen as to the "How" of this subject to be premature, and, according to my view and experience, false and one-sided. This, my declaration, is signed and executed before a Notary and witnesses.—(Signed) SAMUEL BELLACHINI, Berlin, December 6th, 1877.

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By M.A. (Oxon.)

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct séances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex; the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in uncomfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

The first indications of success usually are a cool breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over but not in contact with it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means; if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly—Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning Spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your Reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

Light:

A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—*Goethe*.

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[The Editor of "Light" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

On Thursday, the 17th, the London Theosophists held a conversazione at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. Invitations were issued to meet Mr. Sinnett. Some 270 assembled, and among them were many faces well known in society, and not a few men of letters and science whose judgment and opinion the world is accustomed to treat with deference. The company would be described in the language of the ordinary reporter as at once fashionable and influential. During the evening the President of the London Lodge delivered an introductory address which dealt generally with the pretensions of Theosophy, and its attitude towards the religions of the day. It was forcibly pointed out that as a religion Theosophy found nothing in the theologies of the hour that barred its acceptance. The speaker, a Catholic Christian, was in intimate accord with the author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, though they had drawn their inspiration from two such apparently divergent sources.*

But the feature of the evening was an address from Mr. Sinnett, in the course of which he stated with his usual force and clearness the position of the Theosophical Society. Before attempting an outline of what he put forward, I may remark that the publication of his book, and, in no less degree, the large gathering that he addressed, as well as the speech which he then delivered, mark a new departure in the history of Theosophy in London. So long as the Society was one of students, attracted by a common taste, and perhaps bound together by a common hope that some light would eventually dawn on the faithful watcher from the source of light and truth—the East, the world had little or nothing to do with the Theosophists. Even Spiritualists had no necessary concern with them except in so far as it was necessary to vindicate their own beliefs from assault, or desirable to comprehend a philosophy which so nearly touched their own interests. But now that the veil of secrecy has been to a considerable extent cast aside, the world and the Spiritualists are bound to consider the claims made on behalf of Theosophy.

What may be the answer of the various types of mind to which Mr. Sinnett addressed himself on Thursday last, I do not know. Possibly I should not be far wrong if I were to

say that many would go away bewildered with a feeling that there are antecedent points of difficulty to be settled, before examining the superstructure so skilfully raised on a basis that has not yet been submitted to a sufficient examination. And it requires a more exhaustive study of the scheme of thought expounded in Mr. Sinnett's volume, and stated more popularly in his recent addresses at the Prince's Hall, and at various fashionable assemblies in London drawing-rooms, before I, for one, should like to commit myself to a statement of what unquestionably appears on the surface to be the irreconcilability of Theosophical and Spiritualistic belief. I do not know whether the doctrines that antagonise each other are, in the language of theology, cardinal and to be held *de fide*. I hope not: for if it be so then the knowledge of the Spiritualist is at variance with the truth as propounded by the Theosophist. No doubt it is on the great question of spirit-communion that the battle will rage most fiercely. It is that which seems to me to be so utterly beyond accommodation. But this is a question far too wide and imperial in its import to be discussed with imperfect knowledge and with the insufficient space at my disposal. It is one to which it will be incumbent on me to recur. Meantime I return to Mr. Sinnett's address, of which I present a brief epitome.

He commenced with some words in explanation of the attitude in which the Theosophical Society stood towards the work in which it is engaged, and the adepts in India with which it is connected. To make these relations intelligible he entered, in the first instance, into an account of the objects with which occult devotees in the East pursued adeptship, and the nature of their achievement if they attained it. The purpose they sought arose out of their comprehension, in the first place, of that great scheme of human evolution set forth recently in Mr. Sinnett's book on "*Esoteric Buddhism*." For all mankind at this present stage of the evolutionary process, or for the vast majority, the exceptions so far hardly requiring to be taken into account in a broad, general sketch of the position, there was a certain sort of spiritual future awaiting each Ego at death. And this spiritual future might easily be one of great and elevated enjoyment. But the pursuer of adeptship aimed at something more than elevated enjoyment in the spiritual state; he aimed at great developments of knowledge concerning Nature, and at perpetuity of existence, even beyond that very remote period in future evolution up to which the majority of mankind might gradually drift.

Nature would not grant perpetuity of existence which itself was only compatible with very advanced and enlarged knowledge, to any Ego, however good and virtuous, as a reward for mere goodness. The natural reward of goodness was happiness in the spiritual state,—a happiness, the duration of which might enormously transcend the brief periods of objective existence in which it might have been earned, but which in the progress of ages would come to an end by the exhaustion of the causes which had produced it. The only way to get on in the evolutionary process beyond the stage to which goodness could carry the Ego was to develop supreme spiritual wisdom or knowledge, and that was the object at which the efforts of Adepts were directed. Now,

* A full report of the Address of Mrs. Kingsford appears on page 337.

above all things, the Adepts in pursuing this object were eager to unite their own progress with that of the human race generally to the utmost extent of their power to accomplish this. Far from being selfish in their struggle for development, they were in such a position as to know that a policy of selfishness would be fatal to their own advancement, and learned to seek this in the total abandonment of their own personal welfare as compared with the effort to benefit others. They were constantly engaged in intervention, by one means or another, in the affairs of the world, even though the conditions of their existence forbade them from intermingling with the world. Their action was carried on by means of those higher senses and faculties with which their occult training invested them. In reference to these powers, it was desirable that people who paid attention to the subject should understand that the Adept did not seek occult knowledge for the sake of the powers it incidentally invested him with any more than a patriotic soldier would seek a military career for the sake of wearing a red coat. The powers of adeptship were a very embarrassing fact connected with that state of knowledge, for these powers were the explanation of the apparently timid and seemingly unreasonable policy of silence and reservation in regard to their knowledge which the Adepts persisted in following. To teach people in general the mere philosophy of Occultism, if that were done freely and carelessly, would be to put them within the reach of secrets the possession of which would enable them, if willing to do evil to others, to work the most disastrous confusion all through human society and commit almost any crimes undetected.

On the other hand, it was conceived by the Adepts that the time had now come when it was necessary to fling into the current of human thought some knowledge of true spiritual science, that mankind might be armed, in advance, with a higher religion to take the place of superstitious creeds and dogmas by the time these should crumble away. It was out of this conviction, on their part, that the Theosophical Society had arisen. That Society, and the teachings conveyed to the world through its intermediation, constituted an offer of enlightenment to the civilised world in regard to true spiritual science, the importance of which could not be overrated. It remained to be seen how far the advanced thinkers of London would respond to that offer, how far they would realise the coherence, beauty, and truth of the teachings so far put forward, and unite in asserting an intelligent demand for more. That demand, to be successful, would now have to be made by a Theosophical Society which should take a somewhat new departure. Hitherto that Society had been rather a body of secluded thinkers and students, as far as the British branch was concerned at all events, than a body of persons seeking to make converts. Now the time had come when the Society had done all it could do along its old lines of effort. In order that its beneficent work might be carried on in the future on the larger scale now contemplated and to the grander results now hoped for, it was necessary that it should take up a position of dignity and influence, that it should be reinforced by qualified representatives of the culture and intellectual effort of the time, and that its hands should be strengthened for the task now lying before it. These considerations had suggested the demonstration of that evening, which was the first effort of any kind which the London Society had made to make itself known beyond the narrow limits of its original organisation. Comparatively small and insignificant to appearance as the Society might be at present, the facts of the whole position were such as to lead those who had studied them most closely to the conclusion that this little Society was in possession of the first gleams of the spiritual science which must ultimately become the religion of all the world.

In the course of his speech, and in further explanation

of the point of view from which the Adepts themselves regarded the efforts embodied in the Theosophical Society, Mr. Sinnett read the following passages from a letter written by one of the greatest among them. The letter had been specially aimed at repressing the craving for scientific explanations of abnormal phenomena which had been freely expressed in the beginning by Europeans in India connected with the Society.

"It is not the individual and determined purpose of obtaining for oneself Nirvana (the culmination of all knowledge and absolute wisdom), which is, after all, only an exalted and glorious selfishness, but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead, on the right path, our neighbour,—to cause as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can to benefit by it,—which constitutes the true Theosophist.

"The intellectual portions of mankind seem to be fast dividing into two classes, the one unconsciously preparing for itself long periods of temporary annihilation or states of non-consciousness, owing to the deliberate surrender of their intellect, and its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition—a process which cannot fail to lead to the utter deformation of the intellectual principle; the other unrestrainedly indulging its animal propensities with the deliberate intention of submitting to annihilation pure and simple, or, in cases of failure, to millenniums of degradation after physical dissolution. Those intellectual classes, reacting upon the ignorant masses which they attract, and which look up to them as noble and fit examples to follow, degrade and morally ruin those they ought to protect and guide.

"In view of the ever increasing triumph, and at the same time the misuse of free thought, it is time that Theosophy should enter the arena. Once delivered from the dead weight of dogmatic interpretations and anthropomorphic conceptions, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be found identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Chrishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shewn as different means for one and the same highway to final bliss, Nirvana. Mystical Christianity, that is to say, that Christianity which teaches self-redemption through one's own seventh principle—the liberated Para-atma or Augoeides, called by the one, Christ, by the other Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit—will be just the same truth as the Nirvana of Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory, apparent self, to recognise our true self in a transcendental Divine life. But if we would not be selfish we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognise the reality of that transcendental self. . . Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans, many of them loaded with the gifts of blind fortune, the rationale of the spiritual telephone and astral body formation, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, the poor, and the despised to take care of themselves and their hereafter the best they know how. Never. Perish rather the Theosophical Society with both its hapless founders, than that we, the devoted followers of that spirit incarnate of absolute self-sacrifice, of philanthropy, divine kindness, as of all the highest virtues attainable on this earth of sorrow, the man of men, Gautama Buddha, should ever allow the Theosophical Society to represent the embodiment of selfishness the refuge of the few, with no thought in them for the many."

M. A. (OXON.)

To avoid the necessity for response to inquiries from any of our readers it may be well to state that all information respecting the Theosophical Society may be obtained from any of the following gentlemen:—

EDWARD MAITLAND, Esq., Oxford and Cambridge Club, Pall Mall.

SAMUEL WARD, Esq., Orleans Club, King-street, St. James's.

A. F. SINNETT, Esq., Empire Club, Grafton-street, Bond-street.

The *Echo* of July 20th, contains the following paragraph:—"We hear that Mr. Irving Bishop has actually sent to the Victoria Hospital for Children the magnificent sum of five pounds sterling, as the proceeds of the thousand pounds wager meeting in St. James's Hall. Considering that the Hospital was made a sounding-board for the meeting, considering the lofty and disinterested motives of the transatlantic thought-reader; considering the Hall was filled by people who had given a guinea, or a half-guinea, or five shillings, or a shilling, for admittance, it is rather disappointing to the Hospital to receive only five pounds, and particularly as some of the officers of the Hospital worked so hard to advertise Mr. Bishop." We do not share the disappointment of our contemporary, as we believe Mr. Bishop has done similar things in the United States and in some towns in Great Britain. It would appear, after all, that exposers of Spiritualism make more out of charities than do the latter out of exposers.

THE BRITISH THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

As announced in our last, an open meeting of the London Lodge of the British Theosophical Society took place on Tuesday evening, July 17th, at 9 p.m., at the Prince's Hall, Piccadilly.

The principal object of the meeting was to meet Mr. A. P. Sinnett, who has recently returned to this country from India.

The address of the President of the Theosophical Society, alluded to in another column, was as follows :—

"No doubt, our guests will expect me to explain what is meant by the word 'Theosophy,' and what are the aims and objects of the Society over which I preside. I will attempt, in as few words as possible, to give a reply to both these questions.

"Theosophy is the science of the Divine. In this age the word science is readily understood; not so the word Divine. We Theosophists understand by the word Divine, the hidden, interior and primal quality of existence; the noumenal as opposed to the phenomenal. Our relations to the Divine we hold to be relations not to the exterior, but to the within, not to that which is afar off, but to that which is at the heart of all being, the very core and vital point of our own true self. To know ourselves, is, we hold, to know the Divine. And, renouncing utterly the vulgar exoteric, anthropomorphic conception of Deity, we renounce also the exoteric acceptance of all myths and legend associated therewith, replacing the shadow by the substance, the symbol by the significance, the great historical by the true ideal. We hold that the science of the Divine is necessarily a science of such subtle meanings and transcendent verities that common language too poorly conveys them, and they have thus, by universal consent throughout the world, found their only possible expression by the medium of types and metaphors. For metaphor is the language of the poet, or seer, and to him alone is it given to know and to understand the Divine. In the picture-world in which he lives and moves all interior and primal verities are formulated in visions rather than in words. But the multitude for whom he records his visions takes the metaphor for the reality, and exalts the eidolon in the place of the God.

"The object of the Theosophical Society is therefore to remove this misapprehension; to unveil Isis; to restore the Mysteries. Some of us have doubted whether such act of unveiling and of restoration is altogether prudent, arguing that the quality of mind needed for the comprehension of pure truth is rare, and that to most supernaturalism and even superstition are necessities. The answer to such objection is that the present system of theological teaching has long been and still is an impassable barrier in the way of right thought and action, and of scientific progress; a fruitful spring of oppression, fraud and fanaticism, and a direct incentive to materialistic, agnostic, and pessimistic doctrines. In the interest of science, of philosophy, and of charity therefore, the Theosophical Society has resolved to invite all earnest thinkers, students, and lovers of their kind to examine the system and method it presents, and to satisfy themselves that the fullest claims of science are compatible with, and its latest revelations necessary to, the true comprehension of esoteric religion.

"I have used the word religion. It is a word which has unhappily become divorced from its true meaning, and associated with much that is inherently repugnant thereto. One of the efforts of this Society will be to restore to sacred things sacred meanings. Religion is the science of interpretation, the science of binding together earth and Heaven, the science of correspondences, of Sacraments, or as they were called in all old times, the Mysteries. And the religious man is he who is bound together, in whom heart and head have equal sway, in whom Intellect and Conscience work together and in harmony, who is at unity with himself and at one with the whole world of Being. In this sense we are a religious society, for one of our avowed aims is the promotion of universal brotherhood. We profier an Eirenicon to all churches, claiming that, once the veil of symbolism is lifted from the divine face of Truth, all churches are akin, and the basic doctrine of all is identical. The guest of the evening, who stands beside me, is a Buddhist. I, the President of the English Lodge, am a Catholic Christian. Yet we are one at heart, for he has been taught by his Oriental gurus the same esoteric doctrines which I have found under the adopted pagan symbols of the Roman Church, and which esoteric Christianity you will find embodied in 'The Perfect Way.' Greek, Hermetic, Buddhist, Vedantist, Christian—all these Lodges of the Mysteries are fundamentally one and identical in doctrine. And that doctrine is the interpretation of Nature's hieroglyphs, written for us in sky

and sea and land, pictured for us in the glorious pageantry of night and day, of sunset and dawn, and woven into the many-coloured warp and woof of flower, and seed, and rock, of vegetable and animal cells, of crystal and dewdrops, and of all the mighty phenomena of planetary cycles, solar systems, and starry revolutions.

"We hold that no single ecclesiastical creed is comprehensible by itself alone, uninterpreted by its predecessors and its contemporaries. Students, for example, of Christian theology will only learn to understand and to appreciate the true value and significance of the symbols familiar to them by the study of Eastern philosophy and pagan idealism. For Christianity is the heir of these, and she draws her best blood from their veins. And forasmuch as all her great ancestors hid beneath their exoteric formulas and rites—themselves mere husks and shells to amuse the simple-minded—the esoteric or concealed verities reserved for the initiate, so also she reserves for earnest seekers and deep thinkers the true interior Mysteries which are one and eternal in all creeds and churches from the foundation of the world. This true, interior, transcendental meaning is the Real Presence veiled in the elements of the Divine Sacrament: the mystical substance and the truth figured beneath the bread and the wine of the ancient Bacchic orgies, and now of our own Catholic Church. To the unwise, the unthinking, the superstitious, the gross elements are the objects of the rite; to the initiate, the seer, the son of Hermes, they are but the outward and visible signs of that which is ever and of necessity, inward, spiritual, and occult.

"But, not only is it necessary to the Theosophist to study the myths and symbology of former times and contemporary cults; it is also necessary that he should be a student of nature. The science of the Mysteries can be understood only by one who is acquainted, in some measure at least, with the physical sciences; because Theosophy represents the climax and essential motive-meaning of all these, and must be learned in and by and through them. For unless the physical sciences be understood, it will be impossible to comprehend the doctrine of *Vehicles*, which is the basic doctrine of occult science. 'If you understand not earthly things,' said the hierarch of the Christian Mysteries, 'how shall you understand heavenly things?' Theosophy is the royal science. To the unlearned no truth can be demonstrated, for they have no faculty whereby to cognise truth, or to test the soundness of theorems. Ours may be indeed the religion of the poor, but it cannot be that of the ignorant. For we disclaim alike authority and dogma; we appeal to the *reason of humanity*, and to educated and cultivated thought. Our system of doctrine does not rest upon a remote past, it is built upon no series of historical events assailable by modern criticism, it deals not with extraneous personalities or with arbitrary statements of dates, facts, and evidence; but it relates, instead, to the living to-day, and to the ever-present testimony of nature, of science, of thought, and of intuition. That which is exoteric and extraneous is the evanescent type, the historical ideal, the symbol, the form; and these are all in all to the unlearned. But that which is esoteric and interior is the permanent verity, the essential meaning, the thing signified; and to apprehend this, the mind must be reasonable and philosophic, and its method must be scientific and eclectic.

"In the Mahà-Parinibbâna-Sutta, one of the Buddhist theosophical books, is a passage recording certain words of Gautama Buddha which express to some extent the idea I wish to bring before you. It is this :—

"'And whosoever, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto himself, and a refuge unto himself, betaking himself to no external refuge, but holding fast to the truth as his lamp—and to the truth as his refuge, looking not to anyone besides himself as a refuge, even he among my disciples shall reach the very topmost height. But he must be anxious to learn.'

"It may, at the outset, appear strange that there should of late have set in among us of the West so strong a current of Buddhism, and many, doubtless, wonder how it comes about that the literary and thinking world of this country has recently begun by common consent to write and talk and hear so much of the sacred books of the East, and of its religious teachers. The Theosophical Society itself has its origin in India, and the motto adopted by its Fellows declares that Light is from the East—*Ex Oriente Lux*.

"In all this is the finger of Law, inevitably and orderly fulfilling the planetary cycle of human evolution, with the self-same precision and certitude which regulates the rotation of the

globe in the inverse direction, or the apparent course of the solar light.

"Human evolution has always followed the course of the sun, from the east to the west, in opposition to the direction of the planet's motion around its axis. If at times this evolution has appeared to return upon its steps, it has been only the better to gather power for some new effort. It has never deviated from its course in the main, save to the right or left, south or north, in its orderly march westward. And slowly, but surely, this great wave of human progress has covered the earth in the wake of the light, rising eastward with the dawn, and culminating mid-heaven with the Catholic Church. In India first, at the beginning of the cycle, rose the earliest glory of the coming day; thence it broke on Syria and on Egypt, where it gave birth to the Kabbalistic Hermetic gnosis. Passing thence to Grecian shores, the mysteries of the gods arose among the myrtle and olive groves of Thebes and Athens; and these mysteries, imported into Rome in their turn, became merged in the symbols and doctrines of the Christian Church. And as the cyclic day of human development draws on towards its close in the western hemisphere, the light fades from the orient, and twilight gradually obscures that eastern half of the globe which was erst the spring of dawn and sunshine. What then? When the round of the terrestrial globe is thus accomplished, when the tidal wave of evolution has swept the whole expanse from India to America, it arrives once more at its point of departure. Scarce has day dipt beneath the horizon of the occident, then lo, again the east begins to glow anew with the faint dawn of another cycle, and the old race, whose round has now been accomplished, is about to be succeeded by a race more perfect, more developed, wise and reasonable.

"There are indications that our epoch has seen the termination of such a planetary cycle as that described, and that a new dawn, the dawn of a better and a clearer day, is about once more to rise in the sacred East. Already those who stand on the hills have caught the first grey rays reflected from the breaking sky. Who can say what splendours will burst from among the mists of the valley westward, when once the sun shall rise again?

"Some of us have dreamed that our English Branch of the Theosophical Society is destined to become the ford across the stream which so long has separated the East from the West, religion from science, heart from mind, and love from learning. We have dreamed that this little Lodge of the Mysteries set here in the core of matter-of-fact, agnostic London, may become an oasis in the wilderness for thirsty souls,—a ladder between earth and Heaven, on which, as once long since in earlier and purer days, the Gods again may, come and go 'twixt mortal men and high Olympus."

"Such a dream as this has been mine; may Pallas Athena grant me, the humblest of her votaries, length of days enough to see it, in some measure at least, fulfilled!"

Mr. Sinnott then addressed the meeting, speaking for upwards of an hour and a-half. As the subject matter of his address is dealt with in another column, we refrain from further notice now. It was nearly midnight before the meeting closed.

MR. HUSK'S SÉANCES.—We are requested to remind the members of the C. A. S. that subscription séances are held with this medium every Thursday evening at eight p.m., at the rooms of the Association, 38, Great Russell-street. Tickets for admission, 2s. 6d. each, application for which should be made to Mr. T. Blyton, 6, Truro Villa, Station-road, Church End, Finchley, N., or at 38, Great Russell-street, W.C.

PIONEERS OF THE SPIRITUAL REFORMATION.—We have been asked to announce that the subscription list to the initial volume of this series will close on August 30th, and that therefore, those who desire to possess the work will do well to communicate at once with the publishers, The Psychological Press Association. In making this announcement we may perhaps be allowed to mention that the book will contain biographical sketches of three of the foremost figures in what may we think fitly be called the Spiritual Reformation of the Nineteenth Century. These men—Mesmer, Kerner, and William Howitt—were typical of their respective schools of psychological science, and all three may be regarded as the most prominent figures in the mighty movement of Modern Spiritualism. In the sketch of Mesmer's life and labours will be included a large amount of matter new to English readers. It needs no recommendation of ours to assure our readers that this new book will be well worth perusal—that goes without saying as regards anything which comes from so graceful and facile a writer as Mrs. Watts. The publishers inform us that the scale of prices for subscribers and those who obtain the book after it is issued will be rigidly adhered to. Full particulars will be found in another column.

SPIRIT TEACHINGS.

SECOND SERIES.

This series of Spirit-Teachings, like the former, is made up of selections from a great mass which have been automatically written during a series of years. They are selected on no other principle than that of printing what has been valuable to the person for whom they were originally given, in so far as this can be done without trenching on what is merely of personal and private application. The latter consideration excludes a great mass of what would otherwise be interesting and valuable matter. The phraseology has been preserved, as far as possible, intact, names only being omitted. The series follows directly on the first, from which, indeed, it is separated only by the accident of its publication in another journal, and after some considerable interval of time. The publication is resumed in deference to many repeated requests.

M.A. (Oxon.)

No. XL.

[The subjoined communication was written eight years ago, and is an amplification of some previous attempts to give information in the circle. At the time it was given I had no knowledge of the technical terms of metaphysics, or to be accurate, no clear conception of its technical methods, and of the exact sense in which its terms are employed. It is probable, therefore, that that lack in my mind affects the form, though not the matter, of this message.]

The blessing of the All-wise rest upon you. We endeavoured to convey to you truth as far as you can grasp it respecting the origin of spirit. The essential parts of what was imperfectly said are as follows: Spirit, of which you know naught experimentally, is a substance known to us as really as it is unknown to you. Your senses are not made to take cognisance of it. It is too ethereal, and escapes your notice. You can only trace it in its effects. Rarely can you do that, for you are not yet acquainted with the laws which govern gross matter. You are ignorant of many qualities which matter possesses: you do not know the laws which govern its changes, transmutations, and conditions. Still less do you know the far subtler laws which regulate the relation between spirit and matter: the processes by which spirit deals with material objects: the power it possesses of transmuting its conditions, and even of suspending its existence as it seems to you.

To you matter seems solid, objectively palpable, and real. To us it is of all grades or qualities of existence; from that which is barely cognisable—as certain forms of material existence are only microscopically visible to your senses—through the various grades which are best symbolised to you as aërial, fluidic, and solid. Nor is this dependent on any actual change in the objects themselves. When we used the symbol of the microscope we did not intend to imply minuteness. We only wished to convey to you that, as there are forms of material life only cognisable by you with the help of the microscope, so there are conditions of matter which, though perfectly substantial to you, are not so to us; nay, are not perceptible, and this may be, and is, entirely independent of size: taking place in objects respecting the objective solidity of which you would smile if a doubt were suggested. The cause of this is that matter to us is not an objective fact. Spirit is the real substance. Matter is only one of the modes of its presentation.

If you analyse your conception of spirit you will find that you regard it as eminently unsubstantial, vapoury, and formless; it may be that *mist* will symbolise your idea. If we were to say that the table at which you sit is only substantial in so far as it is spiritual, we should convey to you an idea which would not be comprehensible to you. Yet such is the case. To you the material fibre is substantial and objectively real. To us it is the spiritual part that is real, the material only cognisable by those of us who have become accustomed to visit your earth. A change of state in you would produce a similar effect. At times when we have opened the spiritual senses you have seen as we see. Matter then is shadowy, and spirit is substantial. This, then, is the first point that you must bear in mind. Spirit is a substance having form and shape. So the spirit-world is real and substantial, surrounding and underlying this material world; organised of spirit substance in various grades and degrees from the most impalpable vapour up to the densest solidity.

The realm of spirit pervades your earth; animates all things; and gives to animal, and plant, and vegetable its real existence. You are so constituted as not to see this, save fitfully and by clairvoyance, that is, by the opening of one of the spiritual senses by which you can discern spiritual things. That

you do not always see it, is no proof that it does not exist. It only shews the imperfection of your senses, and the low plane of development which you now occupy. One day you will find that all that now seems real to you is only the shadow of the true : all that seems indisputably objective is only a phantasmagorial picture : all that seem drifting, airy, and uncertain is the true and the eternal, of which you only catch distinct glimpses as the mists that obscure your spiritual vision lift for a moment and shew you the distinct prospect. So may the traveller pause to view the fantastic grouping of the clouds that dip down far into the valley below him ; and as he amuses himself by watching their ever-varying shapes, and picturing to himself a story in their panoramic changes, lo ! the breeze drives them aside for a moment, and on his eye burst the massive pinnacles of the everlasting hills which these airy phantasies have hidden from his gaze. The things which he saw were temporal, the things of which he caught only a momentary glance are eternal. Only, good friend, our traveller knows that his mists and clouds are baseless and unsubstantial. You make the mistake of supposing the material part of your world to be real.

That which mankind has thought fit to regard as indisputably real and objective is precisely that which is assuredly phenomenal and unreal. The spirit is the life, the reality, the eternal and essential substance. No one of you, as we have before said, has ever seen a human being. You do but know the shell. You can analyse its wonderful mechanism, complex in its multiform variety, but you cannot set it going when once it has stopped. Its variety and complexity no more set it in motion than does the multiplication of wheels give motive power to a machine. When the spirit is gone the machine stops. It is the spirit that is the real man : and instead of speaking of man having a spirit, you should be more accurate, and speak of a spirit possessing a body. And just as spirit underlies man, so does it underlie and inform all matter. All forces that hold the worlds in place and carry them in their orbits, are spiritual. Every force in its last analysis is spiritual. Light, heat, magnetism, electricity, are only the outer coverings of one inner spiritual force, respecting the Protean action of which you have yet all to learn. The time is not yet come. Spirit underlies all, we say. Wherever matter is, there you may unhesitatingly assert the presence of spirit. All that you see is formed, energised, and vitalised by spirit. Its outer material form is only the imperfect representation of its true spiritual form, a rough cast, as it were. It is a material reproduction of a spiritual prototype.

The elements of matter can have, as you must know, no power to assume form and shape ; one of the essential qualities of matter is inertia. That your philosophers all admit. In its most subtle form it has absolutely no power of action. The most highly organised form of matter can no more act for itself than can the rock. The marble cannot roll out of the quarry sculptured in human form. The action of spirit must be brought to bear on it before that can be. Nor has law any more inherent power. Your statute books have no power to act. The worlds are not kept in their orbits by law, but according to law. The law is but the external expression of the energising force which underlies it. Those of your philosophers who talk thus of law, should, to be logically consistent, trust in the potency of a statute book, unadministered by any external power. Civil law, in the same way, is only the external expression of the rule and method according to which men act. The law is to the force which underlies it as the body of man to that which energises it. Both are spirit. And this spirit, remember, is substance. It is no abstraction, no impalpable force, but a real and essential substance, having power to grasp matter and wield it at will.

Wherever you turn you see evidence of spirit-action, from the worlds that roll in space to the tiny fern that grows at your feet. It energises all, and by a subtle process of chemistry to which your noblest efforts are puny and trifling, distils from dew and rain and air and light the delicious juices and fragrances, and moulds the lovely forms, to which you are so accustomed that you heed them little. Yet it is a truism to say that Nature makes the violet, the rose, the lily. Tell me, good friend, what is Nature, and what are her processes ? By what power is that fragrance distilled ? by what pencil was that petal painted ? who moulded that symmetric form ? You cannot answer. You know not. You have erected an idol and called it Nature, and you have labelled it with some formulæ and called them laws ; devices to conceal your ignorance. Nature is spirit, and her laws are spiritual. All your material substances, earth and air, water and fire, are the home of spirit

All your material forms, vegetables, animals, minerals even, are but crude disguises for spirit, the outer mask which encloses spirit. It were well that you ponder what has been said. We leave you now.

[On a subsequent day the communication was continued :—]

If you will bear in mind the point on which we have before insisted, much that would otherwise be hard of comprehension will be clear. Man is a spirit, and the spiritual holds together the corporeal. The fluctuating mass of atoms which form the physical body are kept in place and vitalised by spirit. When spirit is withdrawn they fall into corruption, moulder, and pass into other combinations. Spirit is the man ; and conversely man, by virtue of his being a spirit, dominates all creation. He is in advance of all, being endued with powers which other created beings do not possess.

Yes, it seems all to work in with an orderly process of development.

Yes, we have told you before, matter on your globe has gone through divers stages from crystallisation—the rudest form of organisation—up to man. The rock and the earth yield to the plant. Vegetable life supersedes mineral. Sensation added, a nervous system given, and another form of more highly organised life is found progressively, being developed from the lowest zoophite up to man. Each step is an advance on the last, and man crowns the labour of creation. You know of this. What we wish you to remember is that as spirit animates and energises all, so does it animate man : and that man differs in kind as well as in degree from all other entities by virtue of his Divine Soul. Here we pause, for we have completed one branch of our subject. Ponder what we have said, and you will find in it material for thought.

Yes, a good deal is familiar to me already, and it works in thoroughly with what is said in the Bible. What you and Magus say throws much light on that book.

The spiritual meaning of the Bible is valuable. It is the literal interpretation that misleads.

DIRECT PRESCIENCE.

The following incident was told to me by the young lady herself and by the other members of her family, who were cognisant of it at the time it occurred, about seven years ago. There could be no question either of the truth of the narrator or of the clearness of her recollection. The occurrence is remarkable from the fact that the intimation of the scene she was about to witness, was conveyed without the intervention of dream or vision.

H. WEDGWOOD.

"I was nearly fifteen when the following event occurred to me. I had then belonging to me a tame siskin, to all appearance a perfectly healthy little bird. One night I awoke from sleep with a curiously strong impression upon my mind that my bird was dead. I was not conscious of having had any dream, but the impression was very strong, and a vivid picture was in my mind of my birdcage empty in its accustomed place in the dining-room window, with my mother and sisters standing round it. I had no doubt that my bird was really dead, and I went downstairs in the morning with a feeling of quite certain expectation, and saw without any surprise, standing in the window, the group, as I had imagined it, round the cage where my little bird had died in the night. I told them at once how I had known of this in the night, and that it was no surprise to me.

I have often had vivid dreams since unfulfilled, but this was not such a dream, and never again occurred to me.

July 17th, 1883.

M. L. S.M.

THE "ST. STEPHEN'S REVIEW" ON SPIRITUALISM.—The *St. Stephen's Review* of June 30th contained an article entitled "Spiritualism and Spiritualists," which was written in a very fair and temperate tone. The vast interest now existent in the subject is recognised, and the author comes to the conclusion that there must be something in it. The only error which specially calls for attention is the statement that "Spiritualism, occultism, mesmerism, and Maskelyne-and-Cook-ism are one and the same thing." As regards the Egyptian Hall conjurers this is certainly not the case. They perform their tricks solely by mechanical and other means, and any one who has seen their show and also witnessed the phenomena which take place at séances, will readily see why no comparison can be made between the two. The one is entirely different from the other.

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Reports of the proceedings of Spiritualist Societies in as succinct a form as possible, and authenticated by the signature of a responsible officer, are solicited for insertion in "*Light*." Members of private circles will also oblige by contributing brief records of noteworthy occurrences at their séances.

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Light :

SATURDAY, JULY 28TH, 1883.

REVIEW.

SPIRIT TEACHINGS. By "M.A. (Oxon)" Author of "*Psychography*," "*Spirit Identity*," "*Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*," &c., &c. London : The Psychological Press Association, 38, Great Russell-street, W. C., and E. W. Allen, 4, Ave Maria-lane, 1883. 10s. 6d.

FIRST NOTICE.

"My thoughts being once seriously busied about the things that are, and my understanding lifted up, all my bodily senses being exceedingly holden back, as it is with them that are very heavy of sleep, methought I saw one of an exceeding great stature, and an infinite greatness call me by my name, and say unto me, 'What wouldest thou hear and see? or what wouldest thou understand to learn and know?'

"Then said I, 'Who art thou?' 'I am,' quoth he, 'Pæmader, the mind of the Great Lord, the most mighty and absolute Emperor.'"

These lofty, albeit quaint utterances from the second book of Hermes Trismegistus, might, with singular propriety, have formed an epigraph to the important work now under our notice. Its author, or more correctly speaking, its scribe, tells us that this volume "is the record of a period during which a spirit of a very lofty nature, calling himself 'Imperator,' was concerned with him."

The name and teaching of the spirit 'Imperator' are already familiar to the readers of "*Light*." The communications, however, which form the volume now issued by the Psychological Press Association, appeared originally in the *Spiritualist* newspaper. "They have been"—we are told—"subjected to revision by a method similar to that by which they were first written."

The Mode of Production

was as follows :—

"The communications which form the bulk of this volume," says "M. A. (Oxon)," in his introduction, "were received by the process known as automatic or passive-writing. This is to be distinguished from Psychography. In the former case the psychic holds the pen or pencil, or places his hand upon the planchette, and the message is written without the conscious intervention of his mind. In the latter case the writing is direct, or is obtained without the use of the hand of the psychic, and sometimes without the aid of pen or pencil."

"Automatic-writing is a well-known method of communication with the invisible world of what we loosely call spirit. I use that word as the most intelligible to my readers. . . . These messages began to be written through my hand just ten years since, March 30th, 1873, about a year after my first introduction to Spiritualism. I had had many communications, and this method was adopted for the purpose of convenience, and also to preserve what was intended to be a connected body of teach-

Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus, His Divine Pymander, in seventeen books, translated formerly out of the Arabick into Greek, and thence into Latin and Dutch, and now out of the original into English, by that learned divine Dr. Everard. London : Printed by J. S., for Thomas Brewster, at the Three Bibles, in Paul's Church-yard, near the West End, 1877. [Book Second, called, "Pæmander," p. 15.]

ing. The laborious method of rapping out messages was manifestly unfit for communications such as those I print. If spoken through the lips of the medium in trance they were partially lost, and it was, moreover, impossible at first to rely upon such a measure of mental passivity, as would preserve them from admixture with his ideas. I procured a pocket-book, which I habitually carried about with me. I soon found that writing flowed more easily when I used a book that was permeated with the psychic aura; just as raps come more easily on a table that has been frequently used for the purpose, and as phenomena occur most readily in the medium's own room. . . . At first the writing was very small and irregular, and it was necessary for me to write slowly and cautiously, and to watch the hand, following the lines with my eye; otherwise the message soon became incoherent, and the result was mere scribble. In a short time, however, I found that I could dispense with these precautions. The writing while becoming more and more minute, became, at the same time, very regular and beautifully formed. As a specimen of calligraphy, some of the pages are exceedingly beautiful. The answers to my questions (written at the top of the page) were paragraphed and arranged as if for the press: and the name of God was always written in capitals and slowly, and, as it seemed, reverently. The subject-matter was always of a pure and elevated character, much of it being of personal application, intended for my own guidance and direction. I may say that throughout the whole of these written communications, extending in unbroken continuity to the year 1880, there is no flippant message, no attempt at jest, no vulgarity or incongruity, no false or misleading statement, so far as I know or could discover; nothing incompatible with the avowed object, again and again repeated, of instruction, enlightenment, and guidance by spirits fitted for the task. Judged as I should wish to be judged myself, they were what they pretended to be. Their words were words of sincerity, and of sober, serious purpose. * * * * I never could command the writing. It came unsought usually; and when I did seek it, as often as not I was unable to obtain it. A sudden impulse, coming I knew not how, led me to sit down and prepare to write. When the messages were in regular course, I was accustomed to devote the first hour of each day to sitting for their reception. I rose early, and the beginning of the day was spent, in a room that I used for no other purpose, in what was, to all intents and purposes, a religious service. These writings frequently came then; but I could by no means reckon on them. Other forms of spirit manifestation came too. I was rarely without some, unless ill-health intervened, as it often did of late years, until the messages ceased." The reader is told elsewhere that "M.A. (Oxon)," in order fully to abstract his mind from any conscious participation in the subject-matter of the "communication," was accustomed to read some book requiring close thought during the time his hand was used automatically by the communicating spirit.

There are further curious facts connected with the production of these "Teachings" which will find their parallel in the universal experience of "Psychics," in whom has been developed to any high degree the phenomenon of automatic writing—or drawing also, which is the picture-writing of the spirits, or teaching by ideo-graphs. "Imperator," we learn, never attempted personally to convey to his pupil the power of automatic writing. From him flowed the teaching, the ideas, the words—probably derived by him from a yet more interior source, still nearer to the sphere of "the mind of the Great Lord, the most mighty and absolute Emperor," as Hermes has expressed it, and whose name or nature "Imperator" appears to bear. "Rector," however, a spirit who was seemingly able to write more freely through "M. A. (Oxon)," and "with less strain upon him," acted as amanuensis to "Imperator." "At other times," we are told, and "especially since the production of the communications which form this volume, writings have apparently been given by a company of associated spirits who have made use of their amanuensis for that purpose." These facts are highly instructive in this connection.

The "Autobiographical" Element.

The volume consists of thirty-three sections or chapters, each one having affixed to it a short account of the occasion and circumstances connected with the production of the spirit-given communication which follows.

These affixes, records of very remarkable psychical experiences, and possessed of the peculiar interest ever attaching to the nature of autobiography, form an individual and important feature of the work. It is to these prefatory remarks that we

owe our knowledge of the great conflict long waging in the mind of the scribe. To "Imperator" had been assigned—as these pages testify—no easy task in the remoulding the very firmly fixed opinions of his charge—opinions cast in the orthodox mould of the dogmatical literalism of the highly-cultured modern theological mind.

The hardest of hard shells of educated prejudice—a wall as of a very Bastille of Literalism had to be broken down—and that by a superhuman power of combined strength and gentleness suggesting as a fit symbol the steam-hammer of Nasuny, which with force to shatter tons of iron at a blow, yet holding in check its terrific strength, can softly break the shell of an egg. The Divine-leading being of the gentle and persuasive, and not of the aggressive force, as regards the breaking of the iron wills of men, "Imperator's" work was of the most patient and gradual. At length, however, the truth-loving, truth-aspiring inner-nature of the scholar is reached—the prison-house of his mind is broken through, a new light of perception arises for him: he recognises himself as hitherto—though nurtured in the high learning of the schools of the world, as having been blind and in bonds. From his mental eye-sight, now, however, fall the scales, and from his spiritual being the chains, and he has found himself at length seeing and free, a man inspired with the free-spirit, prepared in the school of the Spirit in his turn to become a guide to the blind and a liberator to the bound.

It is only through careful perusal of these interesting auto-biographical portions of "M.A. (Oxon's)" book that an adequate conception can be formed of the great task performed by the spirit "Imperator," and this not alone in his especial charge, but also for those who peruse the teachings given through the hand of his pupil, who for their sakes, as well as his own, in truth, wrestled with an angel until the morning dawned.

Here and there, "few and far between," as veritable "angels' visits," in the unfoldings of religious literature has been given forth some book, cast out of the overflowing heart of the writer, a personal record of the mental earthquakes undergone during the process of death to some old faith, and birth into a new one. Such books have won for themselves a sacred niche for all time in the heart of humanity. They have met the needs of countless dumb, but not less earnest and afflicted wrestlers in the great struggle with Divine Truth. Their value is incalculable. They may be regarded as mirrors, wherein the wrestler, in the pauses of his own conflict, may see his countenance reflected and illumined by the uprising sunshine of hope. Such are the "Confessions of St. Augustine" in the old, Newman's "Apologia" in the modern days of the Roman-Catholic Church; the "Apology" of Barclay amongst the early Quakers; amongst the mystical writers the autobiography of Madame Guion, and the much less known autobiographies of the disciples of Nicholas of Basle.

In these world-famous books, however, with which, in some degree, not unadvisedly, we venture to associate this volume of "Spirit Teachings," we find the process of Regeneration wrought out by what we term intellectual reasoning or thought; or else brought about through the emotions of the heart. Writer and reader consider the process one that is simply effected by a far off and veiled operation of the Holy Spirit acting upon the mind and heart.

In the book of "M.A. (Oxon.)" we meet with an entirely new feature; and in this, to the Theologian and to the Psychologist, will consist the primal importance of the book. The process and the results have been the same in all these records of the birth into the new life; but, in the remarkable book now under consideration, we have the *modus operandi* clearly unveiled to us. In this record—as is the case in all the manifestations of spiritual phenomena of these modern days—when pursued carefully to their source—the machinery which sets in movement thought in the mind, and emotion in the heart, is distinctly made evident to us. Here we can behold at their labours the springs of influence—call them what you will—which are the bearers of ideas from yet more interior sources—the elaborators of the thoughts, beliefs, and actions of men. These supernal intelligences are shewn face to face to us—the curtain being withdrawn between the two worlds. In this book we do not hear alone the soul or mind of man questioning and answering itself, as in a drama with one actor alone, but when the mind of the man questions—the answer comes clear and distinct from the spirit of "the mind of the Great Lord, the most mighty and absolute Emperor," speaking in the voice, or many voices, from the world of spirits, which we

clearly now perceive to environ and permeate the world of matter.

In its form of question of the pupil, and answer of the teacher, by which these dignified spirit-communications are conveyed to the world, some readers may be reminded of two renowned ancient religious poems: namely of the "Bahagavat Gita" of India, and the "Imitation of Christ" of Thomas A-Kempis, in its original poetical form in Latin. The mortal pupil Arjun questions the Divine Teacher Krishna, receiving answers from him, as man answering man: the humble monk "asks and receives" in the name of the Lord Christ; both receive spiritual communication of a nature accordant with the age and people amidst which they dwelt, nevertheless marvellously kindred in spirit to each other, and adapted to the universal needs of the spiritual-man of all ages and of all nations. So it is ever with the works worked by "The Spirit," since its laws are universal and uniform. No wonder, therefore, if the children of the Spirit proclaim their high lineage through their strong family likeness. "Imperator's" teachings, universal in their nature, are equally adapted to the mental requirements of their recipient and of the age in which they were received.

To the subject-matter of these "Spirit Teachings" we shall return in a second notice.

A STRANGE PHANTASM.

A curious adventure occurred to me in connection with Mr. Angelo, which I will mention here for the benefit of those who like ghost stories. In March, 1869, alighting from a train at Buckingham, I saw Mr. Angelo get out of a compartment next to mine and walk across the platform in company with a couple of young fellows who were very gay and frolicsome. One of them gave the other a push, upon which the latter said: "Isn't he behaving badly, Mr. Angelo?"

I intended to accost Mr. Angelo, but thought I would wait until he had parted with the two gentlemen, who were strangers to me. Presently they both entered a private carriage, which had come to the station for them, and drove off, but when I looked around for Mr. Angelo, I saw he had disappeared. I imagined he had entered one of the waiting rooms and lingered about the entrance of the station for a quarter of an hour, but he was not to be seen. I thought this rather strange at the time, for the Buckingham station on the arriving side had but one approach, and Mr. Angelo could not have walked away along it without being noticed by me.

In the following week I was at Harrow, and lunching at the King's Head with a young relative of mine, when the conversation fell upon fencing, and the boy casually alluded to his fencing-master as being the successor of Angelo, who was dead.

"Dead?" I exclaimed, "How very sudden. Why, I saw him not a week ago."

"You couldn't have seen Angelo, the fencing-master," answered the boy, "for he has been dead some years."

I really stared. If there had only been the evidence of my eyes as to Mr. Angelo's appearance on the platform of Buckingham station, I should have concluded at once that my sight had deceived me, but I had distinctly heard Mr. Angelo addressed by name. I had the plainest recollection of having heard one of the two young men, in whose company he was, say, "Isn't he behaving badly, Mr. Angelo?" On my return to town from Harrow I went to St. James's-street and had the fact of Mr. Angelo's death some years previously amply confirmed by Mr. McTurk. Here the story ends. Nothing ever came of the apparition I had witnessed. It brought me no portent; it had not been preceded by any thoughts about Mr. Angelo, and it was followed by no circumstances which can throw the faintest light upon it, so that of course I am bound to submit to the inference that I was labouring under an optical and acoustic illusion.

Still I am not convinced of this myself, in my private mind, and I have always thought of the incident as being one of those mysteries which are perhaps thrown into our lives to make us wary of scoffing too readily at strange things reported by others.—From "Seven Years at Eton," edited by James Brinley Richards.

AMERICAN AND FOREIGN SPIRITUAL JOURNALS.—For the convenience of readers, we may state that the *Relgio-Philosophical Journal*, *Light for All*, and other American and foreign Spiritual journals are kept on sale at the office of this paper.

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

A general meeting of the members of this Society took place on Wednesday, July 18th, at Willis's Rooms, King-street, S.W., Henry Sidgwick, Esq., President of the Society, occupying the chair. The attendance was fairly large and representative, what it lacked in point of numbers as compared with previous gatherings, being probably owing to the advanced state of the season. The proceedings were opened by the

President's Address.

Before the real business of the meeting commences, I should like to say a few words on an important aspect of the programme and work of the Society, which is liable, I think, to be imperfectly understood by friends no less than foes. Of the two, it is more important at present that our position should be as thoroughly and as widely as possible understood by our friends—I mean by those who are willing to co-operate with us; since, up to the present time, those hostile to our work have mostly delivered their criticisms from so very broad and distant a view of it, that it would be too sanguine to hope that they could be affected by any explanations of details.

The point to which I refer is our claim to be a scientific society, and to carry on our work in a scientific spirit and by scientific methods. Some not unfriendly critics have urged on me that this pretension is absurd: "You may be right," they say, "but at any rate it is a pitched battle between you and modern science; if you win, modern science will receive a hard blow." If this were true, I for one should entirely decline so unequal a struggle; but we hold it to be the reverse of true. We admit, of course, that the majority of scientific experts still keep aloof from us, and that the agreement of experts is the final test of the establishment of truths;—indeed we may apply to the scientific world what an eminent statesman has said of the political world, that the main duty of a minority is to try to turn itself into a majority. But this is just what we hope to do; not so much by direct controversy, as by patiently and persistently endeavouring to apply to the obscure matters which we are studying methods as analogous as circumstances allow to those by which scientific progress has been made in other departments.

And even now I conceive that the conflict between our view—either the general assumption on which we proceed or the particular facts which our committees claim to have established—and the views of the majority of scientific men, is really much less profound than many conflicts that go on within the field of recognised science. For there we continually see an internecine struggle of opposing positive doctrines; but what we have opposed to us is not really any positive doctrine or proved method of another school of inquirers—much less any established, positive conclusion of science—but mere sweeping negations of persons who have mostly given no study or thought to the matters about which they deny; or, at any rate, a mere general presumption against what appears to have no affinity to facts already systematised. With the few positive contributions which physicists or physiologists have offered towards the explanation of the phenomena we are investigating, we have no conflict whatever. We recognise in almost all cases a partial truth in such explanations; what we maintain is that a careful comparison of them with the facts shews them to be inadequate.

A very different objection seems to be sometimes felt to our attitude of scientific inquirers by some of the persons who are in the best position for assisting our investigations. I mean persons who believe themselves to have certain knowledge on the most important matters on which we are seeking evidence, who do not doubt that they have received communication from an unseen world of spirits, but who think that such communications should be kept as sacred mysteries and not exposed to be scrutinised in the mood of cold curiosity which they conceive to belong to science. Now we do not wish to appear intrusive; at the same time we are anxious not to lose through mere misunderstanding any good opportunities for investigation: and I therefore wish to assure such persons that we do not approach these matters in any light or trivial spirit, but with an ever-present sense of the vast importance of the issues involved, and with every desire to give reverence wherever reverence is found to be due. But we feel bound to begin by taking these experiences, however important and however obscure, as a part of the great aggregate which we call Nature; and we must ascertain carefully and systematically their import, their laws and causes, before we can rationally take up any definite

attitude of mind with regard to them. The unknown or uncommon is not in itself an object of reverence; there is no sacredness in the mere limitations of our knowledge.

This, then, is what we mean by a scientific spirit; that we approach the subject without prepossessions, but with a single-minded desire to bring within the realm of orderly and accepted knowledge what now appears as a chaos of individual beliefs. In saying that our *methods* are scientific we do not of course pretend to possess any technical knowledge or art, needing elaborate training. "Science," as an eminent naturalist has said, "is only organised common-sense;" and on ground so very new as most of that is on which we are trying to advance, the organisation of common-sense, which we call scientific method, must necessarily be very rude and tentative. Indeed, the value to us of the scientific experts whom we are glad to count among our number depends much less on any technical knowledge or skill, than on the general habit of mind—what I may call the "higher common-sense"—which their practice of scientific investigation has given to them; somewhat greater readiness and completeness in seeing considerations and adopting measures which, when once suggested, are not only intelligible, but even obvious, to the common-sense of mankind at large.

For instance, nothing can be more obvious than the need of making as systematic and extensive a collection of facts as possible, partly in order to establish as fact what, we believe, can only be established by such an accumulation of evidence: and partly in order to obtain by classification a general view of the leading characteristics of the facts, so that we may be started in a right direction for investigating their conditions. But this need does not seem to be thoroughly understood. Thus a representative of the intelligent public has informed us that we have now given facts enough, and that the intelligent public now demands from us a satisfactory theory of them. Speaking for myself, I am afraid I must ask the intelligent public to restrain its impatience for a year or two more: a restraint which hardly ought to be difficult, considering the length of time for which it has remained in a state of contented nescience on these subjects. Again, a friend who has sent me a valuable first-hand narrative of Thought-transference at a distance, has thought it needful to apologise, on the ground that we "must be inundated with these stories." Well, it is in one sense true that we are inundated; the stream of them keeps flowing in more strongly than I had anticipated: but we wish to be still more inundated—the tide is a favourable one and it cannot rise too high for our purposes.

And this leads me to speak of the desire which the Council entertain to get as much co-operation as possible in the experimental work of the Society. We have endeavoured by the "Circular No. 1," printed in our last Proceedings, to stimulate the formation of local committees and independent centres of investigation in the subjects, especially, of Thought-transference and Mesmerism. I am sorry to say that this circular has so far produced little effect: I wish, therefore, earnestly to call the attention of our members to it, and emphasise our desire for the kind of co-operation which it suggests. Any great increase in the numbers of the committees appointed by the Council seems undesirable: but these committees would be glad to give the benefit of their experience, in any way that may be desired, to any local committees that may be started on an independent basis for this kind of research—or supposing such local committees to prefer complete independence, we should be no less glad to avail ourselves of their results. In short, if any member or associate of our Society feels moved to assist in any part of our work, and does not find that the circular to which I have referred gives him sufficient guidance as to the best method of doing this, he has only to write to the secretary of the committee whose sphere of operations interests him most, and the committee will do their best to find for him a useful line of co-operation.

I may mention that we had hoped, with a view of interesting our members generally in our work, to arrange for the exhibition of some mesmeric or other experiments at the monthly meetings of which one or two have been held during this season. Circumstances have, unfortunately, prevented this; but we still hope to carry out the plan when these meetings recommence after the long vacation.

I have said that we cannot have too many well-attested narratives or records of experiments, even with a view to establishing the general trustworthiness of the results. The reason for this lies in the impossibility, or extreme difficulty

of absolutely excluding, in any one case taken by itself, explanations of the phenomenon recorded which refer it to causes already recognised by science. This leads me back to the question of the scientific method of dealing with the evidence attested; as to which, again, we find ourselves in *prima facie* opposition with the majority of scientific men. But here, again, as I have said, the opposition does not arise from any general unwillingness on our part to accept the explanations of our opponents; on the contrary, we are especially anxious to give them all due weight in the collection and treatment of our evidence. We only refuse to admit them where we find that the hypotheses manifestly will not fit the facts.

Thus, e.g., before coming to our conclusion as to Thought-transference we considered carefully the arguments brought forward for regarding cases of so-called "Thought-reading" as due to involuntary indications apprehended through the ordinary senses; and we came to the conclusion that the ordinary experiments, where contact was allowed, could be explained by the hypothesis of unconscious sensibility to involuntary muscular pressure. Hence we have always attached special importance to experiments in which contact was excluded; with regard to which this particular hypothesis is clearly out of court.

Again, take Faraday's well-known experiments on table-turning. I have no doubt that Faraday rendered a real public service in preventing ignorant persons from supposing an unknown force to explain the turning round of drawing-room tables when a group sit down to it in an evening party. And if the eminent physicist had been able to explain in the same simple and effective way, the rarer but yet strongly attested cases in which tables are reported to have moved without contact, or to have risen altogether off the ground, he would have "exploded the whole nonsense of table-lifting." But we submit that it is not a scientific way of dealing with a mass of testimony to explain what you can, and say that the rest is untrue. It may be common-sense; but it is not science.

Here, however, our more careful opponents, when they cannot find a physical explanation for the facts related, fall back on various psychological explanations of the fact that they are related. They say that the reporters have been deceived by "conjuring tricks" or illuded by "expectant attention," or led into involuntary exaggeration from the impulse to entertain their hearers with marvels, or have laid undue stress on accidental coincidences, through oblivion or non-observations of instances on the other side:—or when there is nothing else left they simply say, with more or less polite circumlocution, that we must be telling lies.

Here, again, we admit that every one of the suggested causes—not excluding the last—has been, in the history of human delusion, a *vera causa* of marvellous narratives; and the whole detail of our procedure in the different departments of our inquiry is governed by the need of carefully excluding them. What we venture to think unscientific is the loose way in which our opponents fling them about, without any proper attempt to define the limits within which they are probable.

Thus, e.g., when a man pays a guinea to attend a spiritualistic exhibition in a room over which the recipient of the money has perfect control, it is reasonable to attribute to preparation and sleight of hand whatever of the results could be produced by a professional conjurer on his platform; but it is not, therefore, equally probable that similar results in a private dining-room are due to the hitherto latent conjuring powers of a strange house-maid. When a man goes to a house which he knows to be haunted it is not a noteworthy fact that he dreams of a ghost; or even if he lies awake at night in a nervous condition, he is likely to mistake the rattle and sigh of the wind for evidences of ghostly visitants; but it is not, therefore, plausible to explain by "expectancy" apparitions for which the seers are wholly unprepared, and which they at first take calmly for their relatives. When a marvellous story is told after dinner by a person who heard it from a friend of the brother of the man who was actually there, we may reasonably suppose that an indefinite amount of thrilling detail has been introduced in the course of tradition,—especially if the links in the chain of tradition are supplied by persons who are not accustomed to regard scientific accuracy as important in these matters—but it is not therefore legitimate to explain in this way a narrative which is taken direct from the diary of the original eyewitness.

Our endeavour, then, is primarily to collect phenomena, where these and similar explanations have at least a high degree

of improbability. In no case can such explanations be absolutely excluded—for all records must depend, ultimately, on the probity and intelligence of the persons recording them; and it is impossible for us, or any other investigators, to demonstrate to persons who do not know us that we are not fools or liars. We can only hope that within the limited circle in which we are known, either alternative will be regarded as highly improbable.

Reports having been read from the Committees on Mesmerism and Dreams, which, however, are not as yet ripe for publication,

Professor Barrett, F.R.S., presented to the meeting an account of some experiments in the interpretation of muscular indications, made by the Rev. E. H. Sugden, B. Sc.; also of some further experiments in Thought-transference by Messrs. Guthrie and Birchall, of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool; and the Hon. Mrs. Fox-Powys.

The last named lady had addressed the following letter to the Committee:—

"I send the results of a trial my husband and I had alone. To me it seemed like magic! We had tried, I think, three times before this, just for a short time, with indifferent success. I was the guesser, and he held my left hand with his right, and merely thought of a number. I sat with my eyes closed. It was the rapidity with which it was done astonished us—I cannot say, but the number seemed to flash *instantaneously* into my brain. In fact, so simultaneous was it that I began to think perhaps that I had flashed the number into Mr. Powys' brain *first*. However, when we reversed the operation and made my husband guess, he was not at all successful. With single numbers I only had one, and with double numbers two trials.

NO. THOUGHT OF.	FIRST TRIAL.	SECOND TRIAL.
3	—	—
2	2	—
4	7	—
6	—	—
5	5	—
9	9	—
3	3	—
8	8	—
58	24	85
36	36	—
27	72	27
69	28	82
100	100	—
42	42	—
55	55	—
22	79	97
38	38	—
30	42	78
22	120	20

which makes 10 right on the first trial out of 18; one right on the second trial, and one number reversed.

"We tried again next night, but only got five right on the first trial out of 20, and two right on the second trial. The secret of success the first evening I believe to lie in the fact that I felt *absolute* confidence in my power to guess correctly, and to this height of confidence I have never since been able to attain, and it was certainly lacking in the former trials."

The proceedings shortly afterwards terminated.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

Esoteric Buddhism.

To the *Editor* of "LIGHT."

SIR.—In reference to the letter signed "G. W. M.D." in "LIGHT" of this day's date, will you permit me to express the regret I feel that the writer has allowed himself to use language in speaking of the Indian Mahatmas which must deeply wound the sensibilities of all your Theosophical readers. Controversialists governed by good feeling, not to speak of good breeding, generally refrain from attempts to ridicule that which other men hold sacred, but "G. W." has attacked the esoteric doctrine in the spirit which animates the least respectable assailants of Christianity. I think all Theosophists who interest themselves in the current Oriental teaching will applaud the discretion I shewed in refusing to subject the portraits "G. W." mentions to his unsympathetic inspection. I cannot prevent

him from insulting a name we revere, since that has been put, by the publication of my first book, within the reach of his ungraceful pen, but I can keep pictures which are my private property from becoming the subject of inappreciative comment.

It is difficult to understand how any man of ordinary intelligence could, without intending to misrepresent the teachings of my recent book, have caricatured these after the manner of "G. W.'s" almost ludicrous epitome; but the letter before me is not worth serious reply in so far as it deals with intricacies of thought the writer has failed to follow, and is even less worthy of this in so far as the vulgarity of its tone here and there eclipses its other peculiarities. But it would be affectation to regard the initials used as disguising its authorship, and this deeply aggravates the offence against good taste involved in its allusions to the Arhat teacher who is generally regarded by Theosophists, both in this country and in India, as entitled to their earnest reverence. It is wrong for anyone to insult the reverential feelings of others, even in careless forgetfulness that such feelings exist, but it becomes disgraceful to do this when it is done deliberately, with full knowledge concerning the nature and diffusion of the feelings engaged.

A. P. SINNETT.

To the Editor of "Light."

SIR,—Will you allow me, as a fellow of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, to enter my humble protest against the superficial criticism upon Mr. Sinnett's "Esoteric Buddhism" by your correspondent "G. W. M. D."

"G. W.'s" letter is another proof of the danger of presenting spiritual truths to minds not sufficiently freed from the thralldom of personality to grasp great general principles.

The flippant tone adopted is an evidence, in my opinion, that your correspondent has mistaken his vocation, which should be that of a contributor to some comic serial, rather than that of a critic in matters so vast and deep as those contained in the book which he essays to review.

Notwithstanding the writer's modesty in "restraining his sentiments," his opinion of the work in question lies on the surface, viz., that because he does not understand it, *therefore* it must be nonsense, a dictum which I am afraid will have more weight with your correspondent than with myself, at least.

The calm, dignified, spiritual manner in which "C. C. M." treated the subject serves only to intensify the poverty of your correspondent's thought, and indicates how ill-qualified he is for the office which he has assumed.

At the risk of being classed by "G. W." in his category of "incorrigible Buddhistic and other lunatics," I venture to assert that in the philosophy which is now being unfolded by esoteric teachers through the Theosophical Society, I find the solution of more spiritual difficulties than in any other system; and whilst blessing Mr. Sinnett for striking the rock in the midst of the spiritual desert, I will not complain if, in assuaging my thirst at the life-giving stream, I am obliged to swallow foreign particles which, in a plethora of spiritual knowledge, I might feel inclined to take exception to.

I write simply as an individual member of the Society, without committing anyone else to my opinions, and am, yours truly,

EDMOND W. WADE.

Lee, July 21st, 1883.

To the Editor of "Light."

SIR.—A letter from G. W. M. D. in last week's issue of "Light," cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed and without a protest.

"G. W. M. D." shews from the tone of his remarks that his long association with a society which he now considers it good taste to ridicule, has not been the result of sympathy with the objects to which that society is devoted, and his unmeasured abuse of, and scoffing at, those gifted beings of whose teachings, I, and, up to the present, he also has been a recipient, strike his fellow students of the philosophy with surprise and indignation.

"G. W. M. D." considers the purity and elevation of the higher ones as a fitting subject for jest, and I infer that those who reverence them are "incorrigible lunatics." Such may be the opinions and practice of the "higher minds of our Western civilisation," among whom, doubtless, "G. W. M. D." classes himself; but the whole allusion to the baths, fumigations, and glass-ease does not shew either good feeling or intelligence, and is certainly not in accord with the sentiments one might expect to animate a member of a society having for its object the development of the principle of universal brotherhood.

F. ARUNDALE.

SPIRITUALISM IN LONDON & THE PROVINCES.

METROPOLITAN SPIRITUAL LYCEUM.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, 51 AND 53, MORTIMER STREET, REGENT STREET, LONDON.

That the controls of Mr. Morse should propose to speak upon "The true Eden" was sufficiently suggestive of doubt whether the Garden, so-called, was the place or the condition indicated, to prepare the audience of these rooms, on Sunday last, for the prompt discharge of that particular myth from their mental horizon. The historian may continue to indulge in speculation as to the geographical situation of the place, which may or may not have been in the mind of the Biblical writer; and in its symbolical meaning the story of the associated primitive innocence, and deplorable collapse, of its human tenants may not unprofitably exercise our imaginative faculties; but not as the true Eden.

This represents a condition of perfected existence, with its blissful surroundings, so far unlike the abode of an originally God-like being that its very beauty and sweetness will be the result of the struggle for happiness through knowledge, and an acquired purity of actual life, by man himself. The true Eden of absolute goodness has yet to be built up: it is in no sense a structure of the past, and unlike the fabled domain of innocence, will grow out of the badness of that past felt and resisted; and indicate, by its simple existence, that complete and final subjugation of the grosser, by the unfettered predominance of the higher qualities of Humanity.

The condition, and if we like so to speak of it, the place, having thus to be worked for, will be won only by collected wisdom, strength of mind, and universal exaltation of character, representing the development of the purposes of God by the conscious creatures of His will, as distinct from unfeigned because innate and uncontrasted goodness, located on the scriptural garden.

It is of real practical consequence to regard the position as demanding that men's lives shall be the expression of their highest principles, and that the true Eden should equally express the highest happiness of which man is capable upon earth, for until we have mastered the elementary conditions of a progressive system here, we shall find no heaven elsewhere. To labour for such an ideal is to secure fitness for its enjoyment. Complete success may be beyond the reach of the efforts of today or of to-morrow, but the earnest struggles of every day, wisely directed by acquaintance with the character of the need, will hasten the hour for its achievement. We were recommended to try a little self-examination—to ask, each of us: "What am I?" "Why am I what I am?" and "Being what I am is it the best that I can be?" for if there is a hell within us there can be no Eden outside of us.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," and we must be individually able to sustain the qualities of Eden life, the harmony, peace, and happiness which belong to and indicate that state of being, if we are ever to realise the beauty of that profoundly beautiful utterance.

The lecture for Sunday, the 29th inst., will be upon "Human Progress: its Source," and the evening of the 5th of August will be devoted to question and answer, the last occasion of the kind of the season.

LIVERPOOL.

In Rodney Hall, Rodney-street, on Sunday morning, July 15th, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten gave an inspirational oration, her subject being "The World of Supernaturalism." She rapidly sketched the supernatural gifts and powers which have been manifested amongst all peoples and in all times, and described the wonder-workers of India, the magicians of Egypt, the soothsayers of Chaldea, and the sybils of Greece and Rome. She traced the history of supernaturalism amongst the prophets and wonder-workers of Israel, claiming that the Spiritualism of the Christian dispensation and the apostolic period formed no hiatus in the chain of spiritual manifestations. Mrs. Britten then dealt with the history of supernaturalism in the Middle Ages, and described the gross ignorance that prevailed on the subject of witchcraft and sorcery. She urged that the discoveries of Mesmer threw the light of science on the world of supernaturalism, and that the development of modern Spiritualism supplemented and explained the supernaturalism of all past ages, and would prove the harbinger of promise that would ultimately unite the long-separated interests of science and religion. In the evening, Mrs. Britten spoke on "Ancient and Modern Freemasonry." The origin of masonry, she said, would be found in the worship of the power of nature. She alluded to the Hindoo, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman mysteries, and traced out their succession from land to land, declaring that the germ of these mysteries was preserved in the Jewish Kabbala. She then enlarged upon the building of Solomon's Temple, and described how the Jewish monarch, unable to find any wise men of the nation competent to interpret the mysteries of the Kabbala, sent to Hiram, King of Tyre, for cunning workmen instructed in the mysteries of building such a temple as she held would correspond to the grand lodge of the universe. Mrs. Britten then dealt with the building of the temple, the institution of three degrees, the legend of the master mason's degree, and the four subsequent degrees which culminated in the royal arch. The proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to the lecturer.—*Liverpool Mercury.*

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38, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, BLOOMSBURY, LONDON, W.C.

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THIS ASSOCIATION was formed for the purpose of uniting Spiritualists of every variety of opinion in an organised body, with a view of promoting the investigation of the facts of Spiritualism, and of aiding students and inquirers in their researches by providing them with the best means of investigation. The Association is governed by a President, Vice-Presidents, and a Council of thirty Members elected annually.

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The Secretary, or his representative, is in attendance to receive visitors, and answer enquiries; on Saturdays, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.; on other days from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Sundays the Rooms are closed.

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